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ISLES OF ROMANCE

George Allan England

ILLUSTRATED



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TO "BEE"

DEAR COMRADE OF MANY WANDERINGS,

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

A FEW WORDS IN PLACE OF A PREFACE

Who does not love islands? Especially desert or tropical ones! Who does not dream of romance? And high romance, as everybody knows, flourishes on islands with a lusty vigor never found any otherwhere! Is not the cult of islands almost universal? Why should not I, too, as well as any other, write a book about islands? I ask you, why?

From boyhood, I have been an island fancier. "Treasure Island," "The Island of Dr. Moreau," "The Mysterious Island," and many more long used to feed my growing imagination. "Ah," I was wont to dream, "if only I, too, could cross strange, dim horizons and visit islands of romance—"

Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn!

The boy's dreaming has become the man's reality. I have discovered that islands, no matter how far from our workaday world, are after all only bits of the ocean's bottom that happened to stick up through its top. Also that they are inhabited by human beings not too unlike our own prosaic selves. Yet even so, I have found islands, in various strange quarters, to contain more charm and interest per square mile, kilometer, or whatever, than any continental spots. The problems of human and animal biology involved, the social and economic puzzles, the queer shifts and compromises to

get along under hard and unnatural conditions—to “carry on,” despite all creation—have enormously entertained me. So, these past years, I have taken to hunting islands, running them down and shooting them with note-book and camera, bagging them as other men bag game. Any queer, distant island constitutes for me a challenge: “Come see me! Come, tell the world about me!” Far and wide I have accepted that challenge. Wide and far I hope to continue accepting it.

Even now I am contemplating a raid on some extremely out-of-the-way insular domains. I am planning on St. Helena, Madagascar, possibly Réunion and Mauritius. My ambition leaps at Pitcairn, Easter, Kerguelen, and above all Tristan d’Acunha. How to reach these last four, nobody quite seems to know. But there must be a way. “Sirs, believe me, there’s a way!” Who wants to help me find it out? And what reader happens to have heard of any good, promising island with romantic possibilities? Perhaps, if you’ll tell me its name, I’ll go and round it up for you.

We can’t all go gallivanting on queer watercraft or airships to bizarre insular dots on the map. But Fate has, for reasons best known to herself, delegated unto me some such gallivanting job. Wherefore to the stay-at-homes and dreamers I say: “This is your book. This was all written, with some suffering and much joy, for such folk as you—folk who would thrill to the long lift and burst of snowy surfs on coral beaches half a world away; to the dry-whispering gossip of trade-winds in swaying palms; to fogs and floes and gloomy northern forests; to the tang of salt-sea winds and roistering gales; to the cliffs and fjords and booming tide-rips that hunger for the bones of luckless ships.

Vast seas await us and far islands beckon. So, comrades, let us be up and away! Let us gird our loins and tighten our belts a few more notches. Let us haul on our sea-boots, sling our ditty-bags over our shoulders, and—being certain we have plenty of tobacco—face outward, with a chantey, toward the great waters where the spray flies white; the great, wise, ancient and beloved waters of vasty seas, over whose rim lie far and strange our Islands of Romance!

GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

*Camp Sans Souci,
Bradford, New Hampshire,
July 15, 1929.*

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ISLES OF ROMANCE

ISLES OF ROMANCE

I

ISLANDS OF MYSTERY

The Dry Tortugas, Queer Fringes of Uncle Sam's Domain

"THERE she is, boys!" cried Skipper Arthur Swain of the *C. G. 293*. Looking far ahead into the most spectacular of tropical sunsets, I beheld the first vague loomings of a place I had since boyhood longed to see—Fort Jefferson, Dry Tortugas.

Up from a sea of molten turquoise, emerald, and gold, dim islands were arising; one of them topped by a harsh, mysterious something, a gigantic citadel planted squarely in the Gulf of Mexico. That so amazing a marvel could exist there, sixty-five miles from Key West and one hundred and twenty from Cape Sable, the nearest mainland, seemed contrary to reason. At first glimpse of it the sense of legendary wonders which I had long dreamed of as enveloping the Tortugas took visible form. It thrilled me with a delightful sense of unreality, as if this were some Maxfield Parrish dream-city in the farthest Seas of Nowhere.

Swiftly the seventy-five-foot speed-boat cut westward, right into the sun's eye, flinging warm spray over the Gulf weed, racing a school of joyous porpoises,

sending the flying-fish askitter. I gazed with entrancement at the singular apparition of Fort Jefferson, now bulking larger. For hours our speedster had been spuming through magic waters, past low-lying Marquesas Key and tragic Halfmoon Shoal, where the 1919 hurricane had snuffed out five hundred lives. The skipper had been overhauling suspected rum-runners, keeping a sharp lookout for Cuban dope-smugglers and other malefactors. His orders were, broadly speaking, to visit Fort Jefferson, see who might be there, find out what they were doing, and make them stop it.

The splendid southern hospitality of Captain John G. Berry—commander of the Gulf division of the Coast Guard Service—had made me a guest of *C. G. 293*, with a snappy crew of seven men. Rare opportunity! And now as a climax the fort itself was rapidly resolving itself from a dark blot on the horizon into a mighty prison-fortress, forbidding, gray, and grim, sheer-rising from the Gulf. The fairy, floating castle was becoming ominous in that effulgent splendor gloriously splashed with scarlet and purple, with gem-like vermilion, with dazzling gold that painted sea and sky. Over its deserted lighthouse and frowning bastions, among the tangled wreckage of cyclone-devastated steel-work, and through blankly staring eyes of gun-embrasures, the sun shot glares of dying crimson. Dramatic approach to this most tragic and mysterious of isles!

Everybody, in a way, has heard of the Dry Tortugas. But to refresh our memories of the islands, site of the world's strangest prison, let us pause a moment to note that they lie at the extreme western end of the great Florida reef. Ten "keys" comprise the group,

the most important being East Key, Middle, Sand, Long, Bird, Garden, and Loggerhead—so named from the immense loggerhead turtles that lay their eggs there. The archipelago extends perhaps ten miles from east to west. Population there is none, except on Loggerhead, where dwells a lighthouse crew; and, in the bird-breeding season, an additional keeper or two for Bird Key.

Thus, practically deserted, now lies a group of islands where once jolly wreckers and buccaneers held high revels; a group where thousands of men and no few women once lived, and where some of the most tragic incidents of our history—incidents of tempest, imprisonment, strategy, pestilence—once ran their dramatic course.

I was anxious to land at once on Garden Key, where stands the strange citadel in the sea, but our course led first to Loggerhead. As we swept past the fort it stood revealed as a titanic stronghold indeed. No wonder, for Jefferson is the third largest fortification under our flag, the only larger being Fortress Monroe, in Virginia, and Fort Adams, in Rhode Island. "Under our flag" is only a figure of speech as applied to Fort Jefferson. For many a year no Stars and Stripes have flown there. Not even a flagstaff now remains upon its battlements.

So this was Uncle Sam's vast sea-prison! What infinite desolation! One's heart sank at the idea of life-imprisonment there. As the sun glared through those vacant and broken embrasures, one thought of the demon-ship with skeleton ribs, in "The Ancient Mariner." Viewed from the sea, those stupendous, surf-

battered walls and gigantic bastions loom up with the eternal majesty of the Pyramids.

"How the devil men ever brought all that brick and stone and iron out here into open ocean," I commented, "and how they ever built *that*, and mounted it with guns, gets me!"

"Sure, it gets everybody," assented Skipper Swain. "It's by all odds the biggest masonry fort anywhere in America. As an engineering feat it's got everything stopped that ever I saw, and I've seen some!"

But now we had sped past the fort, and Loggerhead was opening out, nearly three miles ahead. A long, low key this was, with palm-groves etched upon the sunset and with a black-and-white lighthouse tower dominating all. Behind the cocoanut-palms slim masts of fishing-schooners pricked up against the furnacel-glare—a scene for painters!

Engine-telegraph chattered, *C. G. 293* slowed, and Bosun's Mate Bowery hove the "blue pigeon." Rousing a barracuda or two, stirring the iridescent and fairy craft of Portuguese men-o'-war, we nosed in toward a gleaming sand-spit. So clear was the water that we seemed magically adrift over enchanted gardens where purple sea-fans waved, where rainbow fishes darted among coral prongs. Broad planes of lapis lazuli and emerald made the Gulf waters paradisaical.

"No bottom at ten!" rang Bowery's cry. "A quarter less seven!" Our slim-waisted wasp of a craft began to roll heavily. "By the mark seven!"

"Get your anchor ready!" the skipper commanded. Our engines thrashed astern. "Drop her!"

Idly our speedster—really a tiny warship with a

machine-gun and a one-pounder to give her teeth—tugged at her hook. The dinghy flumped down. Into it, a stranger in a land exceeding strange, I descended. Thereafter I was pulled ashore over enchanted surfs, with sunset now smoldering in lovely umber and burnt-orange behind the key, and the thinnest little feather of a new moon peeping over the cocoanut-palms. All was as alluringly exotic as if we'd been in the Paumotus or wherever tropic isles are most fairylike.

At the high landing-stage hospitable keepers met us. They had had, of course, no news of my coming. Loggerhead Light—370,000 candle-power and the farthest at sea of any lighthouse I've ever heard about—has neither cable nor wireless. For the most part its isolation is complete. Yet the men love it; and as for the island's cat, she hasn't been ashore in fourteen years!

Acquaintance quickly made, they offered me their best—which was wonderfully good. While *C. G. 293* departed on business of her own, they made me welcome. And after supper, on the broad upper gallery of one of the substantial brick dwellings, they spun various bits of Dry Tortugan lore.

"Pirates? Buried treasure? Cyclones?" remarked Hall, as the vast beam of the light swung its slow, solemn pencil against the stars, and warm surfs creamed along the coral beaches. "You bet! 'Specially cyclones. We have he-ones here, mister, with hair on their chists. The big one of September, nineteen nineteen, that was a cooler. It finished the *Nalbanera*, out here. Big Spanish liner, with five hundred aboard. Radio picked her up, just outside Havana, but she couldn't get in. Seas too high. Next thing we knew,

she was blowed on Halfmoon Shoal, near Rebecca. Every man, woman, an' child was drowned. Nary a one saved."

"Blowed a hundred and thirty-five mile an hour," put in Albury, "an' the barometer was down to twenty-seven fifty-one. Seas breakin' right over this here island. Wrecked some of our buildin's. The light stood, though."

"Yes," Johnson added, "but she was bent over four or five foot."

"Inches, you mean," Hall suggested.

"No, foot! An' when a solid brick tower, one hundred and fifty foot high, bends over five foot at the top, that's blowin' some!"

"He'd oughta know," remarked Albury. "He was up there in the heft of it, rain an' all. It rained oceans. Busted in fourteen heavy plate-glasses. The lens spun round so doggoned fast it run all the quicksilver out o' the bearin's an' nigh wrecked the light. But Johnson, here, clogged it with ropes, at the risk of his life, an' saved it. An' one time, in a cyclone, the windin'-up crank spun an hit a keeper's leg an' busted it. It ain't *all* pie, out here!"

"'Most all our cocoanuts blowed down, in nineteen," said Johnson. "There was hundreds o' dead birds round the light—killed by bein' blowed against the tower. Thrushes, banana-birds, noddies, gulls, all kinds."

"What's more, the key was all littered up with scales," musingly remarked Albury. "Fish-scales, sir, blowed clean off the fishes in the ocean an' scattered everywhere!"

I slept that night in a vast, high, and almost empty

room, its floors scrubbed white as a yacht's deck, and its shelves laden with wondrous corals and queen-conchs. Slept, lulled by murmuring surfs and by palm-fronds that in the trade-wind whispered secrets never to be fully known.

Morning found the reddest of suns rising through furnace clouds behind Fort Jefferson's empty-eyed battlements afar. I wandered that day along coral beaches of enchantment where pelicans heavily flapped away; drank fresh cocoanut-milk; ate pawpaws, sweet and buttery; lazed most satisfyingly in this *dolce far niente* enchanted isle where it is always afternoon.

One of the keepers showed me the buildings of the Carnegie Marine Biological Laboratory, bowered amid palms and hibiscus.

"The professors comes here about three months a year," he explained. "They jig with crabs an' snails an' fish. Try to breed our island snails with the Bahama specie. Once they got one live cross-bred baby snail; an' my dear man, wasn't they tickled, though? They go down in divin'-suits on the reef, to see what's down there—as if who cared! They paints diff'rent kinds o' sardines, too, an' feeds 'em to the fishes to see which kind they like best. They says snappers is the most educated kind o' fish there is. But if that ain't wastin' money, to find out about fishes' education, what is? I'd like to know! . . .

"Sure there's been pirates here. Lots of 'em!" And he showed us Loggerhead's greatest mystery, a very ancient wall built of a different stone from any on the island. "This here wall used to run right acrost the key. In this day an' time nobody properly knows who built it, but the old folks at Key West say it's part

of a pirate fort. They say now an' then a skeleton used to be found here. I know for a fact, long guns has been discovered on the keys. There was French, English, an' Dutch pirates, an' the last of 'em was chased away by the West Indies squadron. Plenty of Spanish coin's been dug up here. Cap'n Benner, that used to keep the light here, he got more'n a thousand dollars in silver, over to East Key. There's lots more found money, too.

"Them as knows, claims there's eighty million dollars in gold buried right on this here key. They say there's a lot hid over in Fort Jefferson too. I know when they was buildin' the fort they found a big, old English cannon. It had the British coat of arms on it, an' the date seventeen hundred. Reckon it was one the pirates had an' throwed over to keep the enemy from capturin' it. Anyhow, 'twas spiked. If you write stories, you might make one 'bout that.

"On Bird Key we could use to see old brickwork foundations, like a fort, at low water. Some folks dug there, but they never found no money. I'd like to find some pirate gold, mister. I would, so!" Who wouldn't?

I undertook no digging, but only mused on the stirring days when picaroons sailed these emerald and sapphire seas; when lofty Spanish galleons met their doom near the Dry Tortugas; when beruffled Dons gallantly walked the plank; and when the Jolly Roger flew to these entrancing breezes. I have always felt a profound interest in pirates, ever since having learned that a certain Captain England was one of the hardest of the lot. How entertaining to claim a bona-fide pirate on one's family tree, even if he only happened to hang there! Perhaps the shades of Sir Henry Morgan,

Bartholomew Sharp, Sawkins, and Dampier, of Ring-rose, L'Ollonois, and Brasiliero still nightly haunt these very sands of Dry Tortugas. Let him who can, disprove it.

Another morning found *C. G. 293* back again, ready to carry me to the huge sea-fortress. Farewells soon over, I embarked with gifts of wondrous shells and corals. Presently we were speeding toward the larger goal of our sea-trek—the most amazing structure, in some ways, ever anywhere built. For a stupendously massive hexagonal fortress covering sixteen acres; a fortress with walls sixty feet high, designed to mount five hundred guns in three tiers; a fortress begun in 1846 and not yet finished—nor ever to be!—the scene of stirring historic stresses, the place of incalculable toil, suffering, and death—does this not merit to be called “amazing”?

Fortward bound, our jolly fellowship of crew diverted me and one another with ghost-stories of the abandoned stronghold. The *C. G. 293*, it seemed, had anchored there the previous night, and some of the crew had landed in the moonlight for the sheer happiness of getting thoroughly scared. The vast numbers of wretches who have died there of pestilence, and the innumerable other tragedies linked with this mysterious island, have given it an eerie reputation.

“It’s a spooky place at night, you bet,” declared Bosun’s Mate Ring. “You can imagine all kinds o’ ghosts crawlin’ round there.”

“Old Jekyll-an’-Hyde cert’nly does lurk there, boys,” Bowery affirmed. “I heard him hootin’ at me last night, sure as guns!”

"Must have been the ghost of the major they kept there a prisoner so long," suggested Seaman Walker. "He was a traitor to his country, or somethin', and they shot him twenty-two times. He's buried there now, in an unmarked grave."

"*I* saw something," admitted Engineer Lilja, "and if it wasn't the ghost of Doctor Sim Smith, that died here of yellow jack in sixty-seven, I miss my guess!"

"We all run, anyhow," confessed Layne, our official cook. "All but the skipper, an' even *he* was goin' kind o' fast. They offered to make up a purse of twenty-five dollars for me if I'd sleep on the mystery grave, but nix on that! Not for mine!"

"You guys make me sick," Engineer Betell remarked, "you an' your ghosts!"

"Well, will *you* sleep alone in the fort, on that there grave, for twenty-five bucks?" demanded Bowery. "Come through, now—show how much you ain't ascaresd o' ghosts!"

Betell, however—alleging rheumatic tendencies—pointedly declined. Later I understood why.

As we drew close in to the fortress it loomed up like all eternity, silent, dour, massive, brooding its manifold tragedies which no man now living can wholly fathom. Though ruinous within, as we shall presently see, its outer form is still much the same as noted in an old description when in its heyday:

The heavy cornice or castellated battlement gives a noble and picturesque feature, and at each bastion the round towers furnish fine stairways of granite and are surmounted by pointed roofs, which with the traverse magazines on top of the parapet give more the effect of an ancient castle than any other work in this country.

What an imagination must have been required to plan, what a herculean effort to build, so vast a structure on that isolated key! Now all is solitude and death there. One lonesome-looking heron, with long-trailing legs, flapped away from a weed-grown bastion drenched with sun. A frigate-bird volplaned high in the speckless azure, vastly far above the beetling turrets. But other signs of life, near those impassive immensities of masonry, there were none.

We skirted the south side of the fort, with Bird Key on our starboard hand. Our swift little wasp of a boat seemed a mere impertinence. Nearer we drew toward the most amazing masses of wreckage I ever have beheld. These were ruins of coal warehouses and conveyors, the steel girders whereof had been twisted up by the 1919 hurricane, like so much boiled spaghetti. Nothing could give you a more vivid idea of the resistless fury of a Gulf cyclone than that intricate and gargantuan destruction—perhaps a million dollars' worth of supposedly storm-proof construction almost in a moment snatched into grotesque entanglements.

Just beyond these ruins we slowed to a rotting wharf, where lay the head of a gigantic fish.

"This is a great old fishing-place out here," said the skipper. "Lots of New York sports would give their eye-teeth to get here. There's kingfish, yellowtails, groupers, grunts, and snappers, besides turtles to burn. You take the forequarters of a loggerhead, and you can't beat 'em for eatin'. An' the eggs, they make the best cake ever. There's amberjacks out here, too, an' barracudas. What a fishin'-camp this fort would make, mister! I hear the gover'ment's willin' to sell it. All

those buildin's and everythin'—it'd make one whale of a camp! This fish-head here, it's a barracuda. Shark come along, though, an' snapped off the body before we could land it yesterday."

We all piled out on the wharf, watching our step lest we crash through the moldered planks, far down into bright-curling seas. Sharks that can bite a barracuda in two at one slash make falling into the sea a doubtful pleasure.

I stood on the wharf awhile, rather dumfounded by this most amazing place. A broad, ruinous walkway extended to the huge, gaping sally-port, the only entrance to the fort. Once on a time the sally-port was defended by a drawbridge and heavy gates, over which were the cells for the most dangerous prisoners. Now the port yawns wide to all comers.

On either side extended a strip of dazzling beach and jungle-grown land. In the old days this land was partly covered by stables, the sutler's store, a mess-hall and barracks for the workmen, a carpenter's shop, and the engineers' hospital. These buildings have all long since disappeared. The moat, however, still remains almost intact, sparkling in the tropic sun. A medieval-looking thing it is, too; and so far as I know, one of the only two genuine, honest-to-goodness wet moats in the United States.

To right, to left from the sally-port stretched the amazing walls of the fortress, lofty, impregvably massive, pierced with broken embrasures, and off to northward topped by a deserted iron lighthouse tower. Every detail of that silent picture stood sharply graven by the cutting sunlight. Save for a lone kingfisher in one ragged port-hole, no life appeared. The mystery

of utter solitude lay heavy indeed on this Castle o' Dreams.

With due caution over the rotted approaches, we passed the moat, seventy-five feet wide and perhaps ten deep, filled with clear green water which at high tide flows in through two immense iron pipes and at low tide runs out again. The moat, however, is never wholly drained.

"Here's where they used to keep sharks," Lilja remarked. "Man-eaters, so as to kind of discourage prisoners from gettin' out. Bright little idea, wasn't it?"

No sharks now remain. Only a swift sting-ray darted, vanished. Pondering the bad old times, I reached the sally-port, through which showed interior glimpses of palms. The port, of marvelously hewn granite, stood broadly open to all the winds that blew. Inside, guard-rooms with menacing *meurtrières*, or rifle-slits, flanked the entrance, in casemates on both sides. Our footsteps echoed hollowly on the worn stones. Echoes, in fact, companioned us everywhere in the fort. A very Way of Sighs that sally-port seemed. How many thousand soldiers and prisoners had entered there! How many women, too, and children had once crossed these stones! To how many it had been a path with no return! For you must understand that Fort Jefferson, most of its dark-checkered career, served principally as a Federal penitentiary, and that its tolls of death, among prisoners and garrison, were appallingly high. Yellow fever, ever lurking at Havana and New Orleans, tells the reason why.

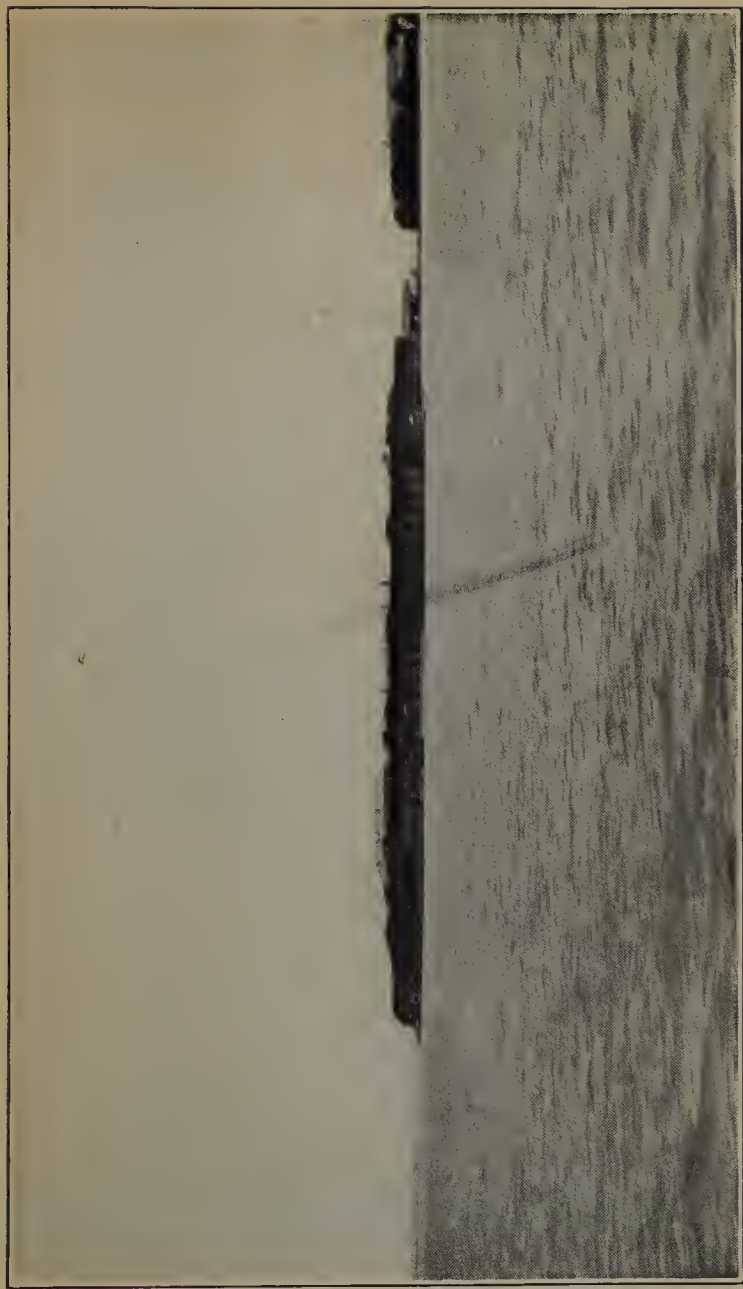
Away back in 1819 the King of Spain sold Florida to the United States for a trivial five million dollars—

the first bit of Florida real-estate transaction in our history. After a time the powers that were took cognizance of the Dry Tortugas and decided they should be fortified. Such a natural stronghold and vantage-point must not be left for some other nation to seize and occupy. Before any military operations were begun, an old-fashioned lighthouse was the only structure on the islands. There, more than sixty miles from his nearest neighbor, dwelt a solitary keeper in a little house something like a Swiss chalet, with a broad veranda before which stood two aged cocoanut-palms. This old cottage, by the way, is the scene of Fenimore Cooper's "Jack Tier."

The fortress itself was begun in 1846, under the direction of one Captain Wright of the United States Engineer Corps. Polk, as you probably will not remember, was President at that time. The plan was to establish a general naval supply station and a fort that should command the Gulf of Mexico, as Malta and Gibraltar dominate the Mediterranean. "Key to the Gulf," it was called. I have a sly suspicion that certain wise heads had begun to foresee the uses of such a place, to hold the South in check when "the inevitable conflict" should develop. How vital these uses were will be described later on.

Fort Jefferson was built, I understand, with cofferdams; was based on foundations of solid coral; and was pushed forward without regard to cost, which proved staggering. "Every brick, every plank, every trowel of mortar," says an old report, "had to be transported from the North at incalculable expense."

The fortress was laid out on a gigantic scale, com-



Courtesy U. S. Lighthouse Establishment.

Fort Jefferson rises sheer out of the sea.



Courtesy U. S. Lighthouse Establishment.

Loggerhead Light, 120 miles from the mainland.

mensurate with its purpose to control Havana, Pensacola, Mobile, Florida Straits, and the mouth of the Mississippi—in short, to rule the entire Gulf commerce. It covered nearly four fifths of Garden Key's twenty-five acres. Eighteen sets of officers' quarters were built, and barracks for six companies of soldiers. These barracks were the finest in the country; and the officers' quarters, three stories high, four hundred feet long, with handsomely finished rooms and verandas, could not have been duplicated anywhere. The hospital, chapel, and other buildings were put up regardless. All this, in addition to the stupendous encircling walls and bastions.

The situation was imagination-stirring. To that blistering, desolate key, fever-bitten and silent amid tremendous desolations, subject to tidal waves and savage hurricanes, everything had to be transported by sea. Living quarters and provisions had to be supplied for an army of laborers.

Tradition says that immense numbers of slaves were worked, just as in the good old days of the Pharaohs. Hundreds of hard-boiled Irishmen were employed, drawn by high wages, and capable of almost any hardship. The horde of toilers sweated and suffered under a broiling sun that cooked their brains. Many came down with scurvy and had to be sent North. For eight months a year the sky was one grand, burnished dome of brazen heat. Infinite clouds of mosquitos assailed them. Still on and on they toiled.

Old stories tell of gales that blew the grub away to sea as it was being carried from the cook-house; of sand storms that whitened the air with coral spicules, cutting the skin like sleet. No matter. Black and white,

they labored. And up from the Gulf, sheer from the pounding surfs, the mighty citadel arose.

Almost the entire work had to be done by hand. It baffles our machinery-softened imagination; but lacking modern methods, sheer brawn had to do everything. What an epic, now forgotten, of expended sweat and life and treasure! No wonder the Key Westers claim Fort Jefferson cost a dollar a brick! The building of the Pyramids had little on that of this amazing super-fortress in the sea.

Withal, mystery enshrouds it. Research yields little information save for an occasional scrap of reference in dusty War Department records. A moldy report of 1854 states:

The works thus far executed consist of an extensive sea wall, which serves also as the outside wall of the fort ditch, and as a breakwater, the highest point of the island being only five feet above water. Large provision was required in this desolate spot, of houses to live and work in, storehouses, cisterns. . . . To complete this fort will require at the same rate about 14 years.

Sanguine hopes, never destined to be realized! In another report we find:

The work is advancing. . . . The outer, or counterscarp, wall, first executed because necessary to prevent the flooding of the island in gales, has been completed. . . . Estimated cost to date, \$989,862.

Wondering that such grandiose plans could have come at last to naught, we advanced into the fortress. Incredible wreckage confronted us. Everywhere we saw massive buildings in starkly appalling ruins—roofs stripped off, walls shattered, empty rooms staring at

the cloudless sky, infinite tangles of brick, beams, iron-work, mortar strewn as by an insane Titan.

Fort Jefferson's career as a military establishment is obviously ended. Its days as a Federal penitentiary all are over. First the army failed to maintain it. Then the navy, which took it in charge at about the time of the Spanish-American War and spent some \$800,000 repairing it, likewise abandoned it. During that war the huge coaling station was built there, and the place was for the last time regularly garrisoned by marines. The cable station once there was discontinued. In 1901 three wireless men were the last survivors of the once heavy garrison. About that time the lighthouse buildings burned and the light was abandoned. The last official use of the fort was during the World War, when it served for a time—as a lead mine! Patrol boats then cruised there from Key West to dig lead from the casemates. After that, down came the flag and exit Fort Jefferson. Now only ruins remain, of everything at all ruinable.

"This wreckage shows you what a Gulf cyclone'll do," remarked Walker. "When one of 'em strikes, everything's got to go. The one in seventy-three smashed things up right smart, but it wasn't fly-bites beside the nineteen nineteen blow. That was certainly a corker!"

A corker it must have been, to judge by its handiwork. It flung up a breastwork of coral two feet high all along the sea wall, and made a ruck of the buildings that reminds one of invaded Belgium or France.

I saw incredible windrows of brick and stone lying everywhere, mingled with slates, old ironware, ashes, excelsior, splintered wood, ripped canvas, broken ma-

chinery, cement barrels, tin, smashed-up furniture. How—I wondered—did that disemboweled sofa, lolling in the sun, ever come there? A stove, cracked like an egg, leered at me. Cyclones play odd tricks.

I pondered how the garrison, in 1873, lost a third of its men with yellow jack, and how some of them died in the very height of that year's cyclone. Dramatic time to die! The bodies, by the way, were buried in a pit of quicklime to avoid contagion. The busy little mosquito wasn't recognized in those days.

Over much of the débris—fantastic as a cubist nightmare—flowering vines have crept, trying, with Nature's kindly touch, to mask the costly wastage of mankind and tempest. And everywhere—inscriptions! Uncountable thousands of names and addresses stand written, painted, scratched, chiseled on every available surface, together with pictures and cartoons, some of fair ability. You can read the names of yachts that have visited this island of mystery; witticisms, gibes, and bitter complaints; pious texts and admonitions about the highly unpleasant consequences of failing to repent.

The inscriptions might, in themselves, make a story. One of them declares:

HERE LIES THE BODY OF
UKULELE SPARKS
WHO DIED FROM THE EFFECTS OF LOOKING FOR
TREASURE IN THIS GOD-FORSAKEN PLACE
VAGABONDIA!

We penetrated some of the officers' quarters, magnificently built of brick, with finely carved granite sills and lintels. These immense buildings, edged with ruinous and weed-grown cement sidewalks, still retain some

of their iron balconies. A sense of heavy oppression hung upon us at sight of these splendid structures now wrecked. War had indeed passed here, but not the war of mankind's shot and shell. The war of elements, vastly more redoubtable.

Here once were homes and families, where now only the crane, the pelican, the rat hold sway. Under the shattered floors extend numerous brick waterways, though for what purpose it is hard to guess. The lofty rooms are finished with thick plaster, still—where it yet clings—delicately pink or blue. Great fireplaces, curved stairways, and iron-grilled balustrades, arched hallways, huge sliding drawing-room doors, handsome wood carvings filled us with sad amaze.

Up some of the perilous and shaking stairs, cumbered with infinite wreckage, we made cautious way, fearful lest swaying iron girders or tons of brick crash down upon us. We found the upper stories grotesquely bashed about, with everything in a jackstraw confusion. Man's hand had been liberally at work there, as well as Nature's fury. Woodwork had been splintered with axes, plaster hacked off, mantels wantonly chopped to bits. Standing in silence amid dust and wreckage, with sunshine ribboned down through gaping apertures, I wondered what maniacal lust of destruction had impelled what vandals to such profitless labor.

Fort Jefferson has been extensively looted, for many years, by both American and Cuban fishermen. Schooners unnumbered have here sought wood for fuel or repairs. Out on the parade-ground again, we even discovered where some unknown had set up a carpenter's bench for his work. Shavings littered the weedy grass. And in the casemates we found where men

had labored resolutely to hack the lead from the embrasures.

"It's not only the patrol-boat crews that've been at work here," Lilja explained. "The Boston Iron and Metal Company bought all the lead one time. Thousands of tons estimated to be here. But they couldn't get much out. Seems like the lead is mixed with some kind of hard, ground-up rock that makes it like iron. So most of the lead's still here. It's one too many for 'em."

We explored the casemate system, ever more amazed that such stupendous engineering work could have been built on this far coral key. Long vistas stretch away, through multitudinous arches. Endless rows of gun-ports pierce the massive walls. Each emplacement is beautifully vaulted and has an iron segment in the floor of square stones for the training of now-vanished guns. Under each lies a seemingly bottomless cistern.

These cisterns form an amazing feature of Fort Jefferson. You have to watch your step, lest you plunge through often vine-covered traps into jet-black and stagnant depths from which—if alone—you could not possibly escape. The whole fortress seems underlaid with water. Beneath all the emplacements and bastions these cisterns lurk, hundreds of them; and you can find them, too, in many places about the parade-ground. Fort Jefferson never intended to capitulate from thirst. At one time it also had condensing machinery to use sea-water, but the cisterns were always its mainstay. The mind runs riot here with speculations of horrid crime; the *plop!* of the victim falling into unsounded depths; the silence of oblivion. Perhaps men really

have been thus done away with here—who knows? So, at least, traditions claim. A sense of mystery pervades this vast and subterranean system.

All the water for Jefferson once seeped down from the parapets far above, through brick and sand filters, into these ominous tanks. Once, no finer water could have been found, but now nearly all the cisterns have gone bad.

"The *ce-ment's* dead, now," one William Felton later explained. Felton was for several years custodian and sole inhabitant of the fortress—a fine, sociable job! "The water's got brackish from the sea workin' through. The last few good cisterns, them daggoned Cuban fishermen has went an' took baths in 'em, so you can't drink from none of 'em, now. Done it for spite, I reckon. Would Cuban fishermen take a bath for any other reason, mister? They used to crawl [*kraal*] their sea-turtles in the moat too, till the gover'-ment stopped 'em. Yes, sir, there's been some awful expense down in that nowhere place. I reckon there's twenty-three million bricks in the fort, but some says forty millions. You can count 'em up for yourself, an' figger it out at a dollar a brick!"

This job of brick-counting is still open. I hadn't time for it; quit after the first nine million. But one thing I did was to note the wonderful quality of workmanship in the bricklaying. The innumerable massive arches and walls are all beautifully "pointed." That is, the bricks are not roughly laid, but have the mortar finished in costly and ornamental fashion. There must have been giants in the land those days, to do such work!

Six stupendous corner bastions provide emplace-

ments whence gunfire could rake the moat—bastions never used in war, for never did this mighty fortress, built at so vast an expense of life and treasure, engage in regular battle with any worthy foe. A bit of sniping at marauders—this constitutes its military record. Within the bastions lurk eight curious, dark chambers, reached by tortuous passages and all elaborately sheathed with wood. These, I heard, were powder magazines. A rifle-ball buried in the sheathing of one such made me wonder who had been shooting there, and why. Another mystery!

Winding stairs lead up through the bastions, stairs littered with bizarre rubbish. One of these stairways brought us to an upper tier of gun-ports, massive as the lower; to the abandoned lighthouse; and to the parapet forty feet wide. Around this, provided with gun-emplacements, chimneys, magazines, and bomb-proof shelters, one can wander at giddy heights. Splendid views offer, of dazzling beach and sun-sparkled Gulf miraculously blue, of shining moat and dim, far-lying keys. But ever one asks how mere humans could have built such cyclopean works, here at World's End.

Great "Columbiads" still sprawl on these battlements that remind one of Babylon's fabled walls. Seventy years ago these immense guns, with incredible labor, were hoisted by hand-winches and "A" frames. Some of the guns are of fifteen-inch caliber. A trip to Dry Tortugas makes us a bit less cocky about our modern engineering prowess. Our old-fogy ancestors were there with bells on too. By way of interest for technicians, I recorded the inscription on one ancient

gun: "R M H 10-in W P F 26920 No 25 1865." What old vet can interpret this?

After a Lucullian dinner aboard *C. G. 293*, with game fish of the crew's own catching—you need only drop a hook overboard and haul in beauties—we revisited our enchanted Sleeping Castle. And now the vast central parade-ground claimed our attention. Things strange enough are to be seen.

There must be thirteen or fourteen acres in the parade. Once this land was fair and smooth, but now the jungle is reclaiming it. Among cocoanut-palms, cork and gum trees, cacti, prickly-pears, Spanish bayonets, and huge seagrape-trees, wind paths now overgrown. At one side stands a sloping structure with a long oven underneath.

"Here's where they used to incremanate the stiff," claimed Bowery. "They'd heave 'em in, fire 'em up, and rake the bones down through the grate. No wonder the ghosts walk here!"

Hard reality forces me to say this structure was the hot-shot oven, where cannon-balls could be heated a nice cherry-red, for setting enemy ships afire. Unfortunately, the enemy ships always declined to come in range.

Not far off, the timber false-work still remains within huge arches of a powder magazine, left unfinished for all eternity just where the masons quit there, nobody knows how many years ago. Another, like it, is a fearsome place of cisterns and mazelike passages, colonized by rats—though what rats find to eat on that bone-bare coral key is a mystery in itself. These magazines, and the whole fort, cry aloud for smugglers, bandits, "runners," and pirates to enter in and take

possession. One of the magazine walls is liberally pitted with bullet-holes.

"Targets?" commented seaman Ring. "No, sir! This here's the executin'-ground, where they stood 'em up and shot 'em. The bullets went plump through 'em and made them holes, I'll bet a million bucks!"

Layne, our cook, claimed that a little white monument we found among the bushes was the headstone of that legendary and treacherous major who was shot twenty-two times; but it may have been only the base of a sun-dial—who knows? Not far away stands a tragic monument, inscribed:

In Memory of Brevet Major Joseph Sim Smith,
Assistant Surgeon, U. S. Army, who died at this Fort
of Yellow Fever, Sept. 8, 1867, in the 30th
Year of His Age. Companies L, M, I and K,
of the Fifth Artillery.

Henry Price, Only Son of Major Smith,
Died at this Post of Yellow Fever,
Sept. 18, 1867, Aged 3 Years and 6 Months.

This brought very close to me the greatest tragedy of all at Dry Tortugas—the devastating yellow-fever epidemic that swept the fort in '67, and that left so terribly illuminating a record of man's ignorance of disease in the bad old days.

The mystery grave of Tortugas lies a little way from Dr. Smith's white marble monument. It is marked by a rude wooden cross whence sun and storm have long since obliterated all inscription. Flowers always adorn it. We found several bunches there, some in glass jars, dry but not very old. Some say the grave is a woman's—that of Mrs. William Italy, wife of the

former lighthouse-keeper. But she died twenty years ago, and her husband too has long been dead. She used (some assert) to be kind to the Cuban fishermen, who still remember her. This, however, seems a bit far-fetched. Cuban fishermen are not oversentimental beings, and twenty years is a long time in the Gulf of Mexico. Nevertheless, the flowers are really there. Who still comes so far into that silent, empty sea, to this island of all desolations, there to lay perennial tribute on the grave of this unknown? Yes, here's a mystery, indeed!

Sunset, blood-red through the broken embrasures, and certain inward symptoms, warned us it was supper-time, so back to hospitable *C. G. 293* we fared. Fresh kingfish and French frieds, canned peaches, and coffee are good after a long day's mystery-hunting. Supper over, and the old pipe going, I took a solitary hike 'way round the fortress. Its effect of overwhelming immensity, of majestic and tragic desolation, can be gained no better than by walking, all alone, around the outer moat wall.

This wall is an engineering miracle. Five feet thick, ten or more high, it is built of brick faces filled with cement-and-coral grout. So solid is it that where the ever-hammering surf has undermined it, sections twenty or thirty feet long have fallen into the sea without breaking. You have to watch your chance, between up-shooting bursts of spray, to advance with moat on one hand, ocean on the other. Be sure your nerves are steady before you start.

Where a sea-gate used to admit small boats to the moat the 1919 cyclone breached the wall; and there

the moat is filled with conchs and dazzling coral sand. But most of the moat still remains intact, an ideal swimming-pool, crystal clear and warm. The whole fort makes one long to stage a movie there, or start a fishing-camp. The casemates, still whole, would house a cityful of folk. What a lark to live there and fish there! And though the place is "Dry" Tortugas, Havana lies just over the way—ever an oasis to the traveler athirst.

From the moat wall you see the real immensity of these dour battlements, built below of yellowish brick, above of red, with innumerable ornamental arches. The workmanship is a downright marvel, with beveled bricks at every angle. Uncracked, still plumb and true, these gigantic miracles of masonry stretch away, defying all ravages of time or sea.

Surf and fading sunset; a silence that "'angs so 'eavy you are 'arf afraid to speak"; flight of a solitary crane over the bastions; peeping of a star across the parapets; stark staring of the fort's eyeless sockets—all these give you a sense of mystery, of tragic abandonments, and stories never to be told.

Later, when night had come, we all revisited the inner fort.

"I see now," said I, "why nobody wanted to earn a princely twenty-five dollars by sleeping on the mystery grave."

"Gosh!" ejaculated Bowery. "A hundred smackers wouldn't get *me* to take no naps on that there bed o' dried roses. Not on your life an' license, mister!"

The crescent moon hung above those frowning black walls; the eerie flashing of Loggerhead Light through gun-ports, sighing of wind-swayed palms, unsteady

flight of bats, together with uncanny creakings and flap-pings in the ruins, served to produce an effect not easily described. A white glimmer of gravestones helped too, in that place where pestilence once had reigned supreme, and where so many a wretch had seen his last of life.

Wraiths of plague victims, of buccaneers and cut-throats, seemed to lurk in every black corner. Each pit and cistern appeared waiting to engulf the incautious explorer. None of us entered the ruined buildings. The jungly open was quite good enough, thank you; and the lights of *C. G. 293* looked mighty fine when we regained our cozy little craft.

That night half a gale came on, and three Cuban *goletas*, or fishing-schooners, sought refuge under the fortress walls. This being contrary to law—since Jefferson is a closed port—duty devolved on us to chase them out again. But common humanity dictated that we let them stay that night. The next day would serve as well.

"For," as the skipper said, "those Cuban schooners are so rotten, any kind o' blow would sink 'em. They never make repairs. Just drive 'em till they go to pieces, with all hands lost, and then it's an act o' God!"

As I was the only man aboard who could speak Spanish, my job was all cut out for me, and I became at once official interpreter. I had to turn the fiery sword of expulsion every way at the gates of that particular Eden.

Wherefore, we boarded the schooners, which turned out to be manned almost exclusively by real Spaniards: barefoot, unshaven men with little *béret* caps, fantas-

tically patched rags, trousers largely made of meal-sacking. In their dim-lit, stenchful cabins they received our order to vamoose next morning.

Thereafter they heaped many coals of fire by giving us certain marvelous stimulants, Cuban hardtack, turtle-steaks, cigars and cigarettes, guava jelly, and bunches of bananas, all the while profusely apologizing for the pooriness of their gifts—

"Pero no tenemos nada más, señores! We have nothing more!"

Then some of them came aboard us, in the misty moonlight, bringing a Spanish guitar; and until the small hours we listened to *jotas*, *peteneras*, *pasodobles*, and other heart-stirring, minor melodies. A certain one-eyed ruffian, whiskered like a pard or a pirate—but a master-hand at Andalusian love-songs—will long remain in memory. I wish some painter had been in our fo'c'sle that night. Exotic, yes; as far removed from our workaday American life as if ten thousand miles away, yet really at our very gates.

Next morning the three schooners had augmented to six, and the bewhiskered fishermen were peacefully hauling their nets, for bait, on the dazzling white beach near the sally-port.

"Reckon they've settled down for a nice, long stay," judged the skipper. "What are you goin' to do about it?"

It was clearly up to me, so I visited the beach. The Spaniards proved highly affable. Having presented us with fine fruit and vintages, they seemed to consider their position unassailable. They showed me quantities of immense black, poisonous sea-urchins that

they had waded for, barefoot, and removed from the beach.

"If one of these spines gets into your foot, señor," they informed me, "it will make a bad wound. You cannot pull out the spine. No; you must wait till the full of the moon. Then it will come out of itself."

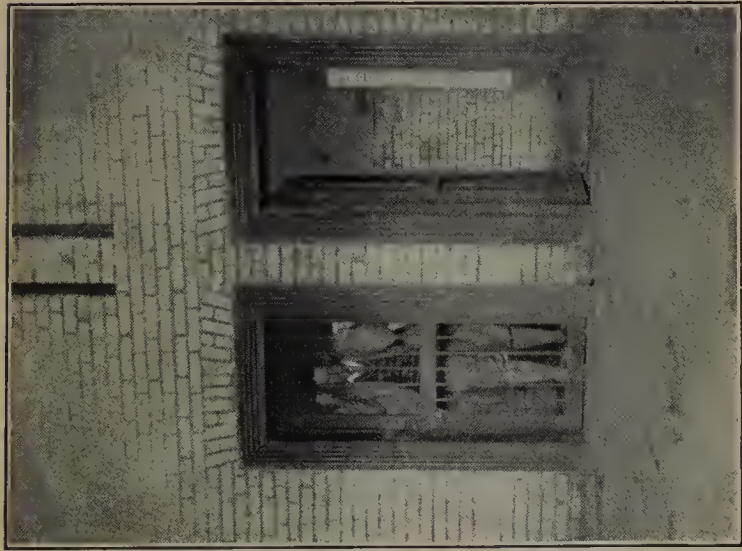
All this was very entertaining, but did not bear on matters legal and governmental. Uncle Sam, via me, was not thus to be flouted. Again we visited the schooners and bespoke the several captains. They showed us dangerous leaks, and let us peer down at lovely swarming fish in their cool green "wells." Then they loaded us again with good gifts both solid and liquid. We still, however, remained inflexible. *Mañana* wasn't in our vocabulary at all.

As no schooner could make sail without proximately going ashore on the beach, in that onshore blow, it devolved on *C. G. 293* to tow them out. So with a great deal of bilingual and exclamatory labor we passed them our hawser, one by one, and "snaked" them out of Eden. With amicable shouts and wavings they made off for Loggerhead Key—there to remain till we should be safely out of view. Then back to the fort they would go, rejoicing. They knew it and we knew it; but the Law had at all events been duly vindicated, and our flaming sword had done its durndest.

Noon found all the trespassers away and our own mission at an end. As *C. G. 293* turned her sharp nose eastward and rang full speed for her two engines, Fort Jefferson began to fade. With a strange melancholy I watched it growing dim through sea-hazes. Lifeless, abandoned, it brooded there in the slashing tropic sunshine, sheltering its memories of incalculable

labor, pain, and cost, of plague, imprisonment, despair, and death.

A tragic entity it seemed to me, peering after us with blank-staring eyes of empty embrasures. Gradually these faded; the frowning walls softened, sank, grew vague. Back, down into blurred, sun-dazzled horizons the grim old citadel descended. It vanished, was no more. Only sunshine and sea remained. They only were reality. Dreamlike, the Dry Tortugas had disappeared, Islands of Mystery that never shall be wholly solved.



The author glaring from Dr. Mudd's
famous cell.



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Dr. Mudd during his imprisonment
at Dry Tortugas.



The hot-shot oven that prepared warm receptions.



The mystery-grave that closely guards its secret.

II

TORTUGAS TALES

Glimpses of the Dramatic Life of Old Fort Jefferson in Days Long Gone

"ALL Hope Abandon, Ye Who Enter Here!"

Time and the knives of souvenir hunters have obliterated these words from the cell door of Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, most famous of all the hosts of prisoners at various times confined within the dour brick walls of Fort Jefferson. Yet men still living remember having seen them there. No motto could more tragically apply than this, which the unfortunate doctor himself engraved while serving long years in chains and at hard labor for a crime in which our modern generation knows he had no part.

Dr. Mudd, you will remember, was the Maryland physician who set J. Wilkes Booth's broken leg after Booth had assassinated Lincoln. He was sentenced to life imprisonment at the most remote fortress in the United States, a bastille verily anchored 120 miles out at sea in the Gulf of Mexico. His story and the stories of other prisoners form a record of tragedy and pestilence and death which makes the name Tortugas the grimmest in our annals.

"Fort Jefferson was built to control the Gulf of Mexico," an old Key West doctor told me. He once,

by the way, fought yellow jack there. "It came into the limelight when the war broke out. All hands were required to take the oath of allegiance to the Union. Some Confederate sympathizers wouldn't, and left.

"All the way through the war the fort was garrisoned by northern troops. Key West was garrisoned by them too. It holds the distinction, sir, of being the only southern city where the Stars and Stripes never were hauled down. And how was it kept loyal?

"Why, because the Union soldiers clapped all the leading citizens in jail. Now and then somebody would hoist the Stars and Bars at night, but down they'd have to come in the morning.

"Early in the war the Confederates planned to capture the great sea citadel out there in the Gulf. It was defenseless at first—seemed inviting attack. The old *Wyandotte* was reported on her way to take it, but never arrived. She could just have steamed right up, sir, and taken possession, for not a gun was mounted at Jefferson. All that the little garrison could do was to keep the drawbridge raised, and drill the women and children to take cover in an empty reservoir in case of attack.

"If the South, you see, had acted with energy and captured Jefferson early in the game, the war might have run a very different course." The doctor sighed regretfully. "With the fortress as a naval base and a refuge for blockade runners, supplies could have been sent up the Mississippi, and cotton could have been moved to Havana. The Confederacy might have purchased early European recognition, sir, as every ship in the Straits of Florida had to pass within full view of the fort. A ticklish situation, sir. Very, indeed!"

Swift, decisive action was necessary on the part of the North. As Major J. H. Shinn relates in his "Fort Jefferson and Its Commander in 1861," the fortress then had not a soldier able to resist even a rowboat of pirates or a handful of filibusters. It was unfinished; not a single gun fit for service was mounted. But immediate steps were taken.

Congress appropriated \$500,000, and Major Lewis G. Arnold was put in command. He shipped provisions, guns, and two companies of soldiers in Boston aboard the old steamer *Joseph Whitney*, and started post-haste for Tortugas.

Says Major Shinn:

When he arrived he found neither guns nor materials to withstand siege. His little army was only four commissioned officers and 62 men. He worked them like tigers, mounted all his guns and sent to Key West for more. The work was very hard on the men. He improvised gun carriages from what he could find. In less than twelve days he informed the Government he could withstand attack. The *Mohawk*, sloop of war, guarded the island. Arnold established earthen batteries on Bird, Sand, Loggerhead, Middle and Brush Keys. Later, Company C of the Second Artillery arrived, and in April, 1861, two companies of Wilson's Zouaves. Still later, two of the First Texas Artillery.

The Zouaves must have been a formidable bunch. Traditions still remain of them, in Key West, as the hardest-boiled outfit of gunmen that ever happened. They appear to have been towed behind a steamer all the way from New York. Major Shinn relates:

They were tough customers, partly prize fighters, bums and thugs. Their condition was pitiable when landed after three weeks on the ocean in a scow. Major Arnold made them burn

their Zouave uniforms and wear regulation ones. They were two or three times as numerous as the other soldiers and threatened to wipe them off the face of the earth, but Arnold quelled them.

They seem to have needed a lot of quelling. Not long after their arrival some fishermen smuggled in a cargo of fire-water, which the Zouaves proceeded to absorb. Mutiny followed. The drunken mob released one of their number who had been tied up for insubordination, and ran to their quarters for their guns. But the Fifth Artillery trained a field piece on them, and a certain Colonel Brooks—walking unarmed into their bastion—arrested forty of the toughest. So that little civil war was ended on the spot, and presently the gunmen were transferred to Fort Pickens. Incidentally, Colonel Brooks must have had his nerve with him.

Reinforcements poured in, a motley crew, with women, children, and all kinds of camp followers, and the island became a busy town, brilliant with lights and active with a thousand labors. Sappers and miners were flung in, and swarms of negro laborers, together with the Seventeenth New Hampshire—a thousand men. Some fourteen hundred crowded the fort, and water ran short, so that it had to be bought in Havana. Smallpox broke out, but was checked. Constantly white-washing the casemates probably helped keep the place tenable at all.

Let us not, however, get ahead of our story. It's about one of the finest bluffs in history.

Major Arnold took the fort when it was helpless, and in six months made it the Gibraltar of the Gulf, bristling with more than a hundred guns and manned

by fire hundred disciplined troops. Thus it not only was kept from falling into the hands of the Confederacy but also helped bring about the fall of New Orleans and became an impregnable base of operations against the South. Arnold and his little army arrived just in the nick of time, only three days before the fort would have been captured by the Floridians. Sheer bluff saved the day in this wise:

Arnold's first gun was not yet workable when an armed Confederate schooner anchored off the fort and sent a messenger ashore, demanding "Surrender to the State of Florida!"

Now Arnold was not noted for soft answers that turn away wrath, nor for dillydally tactics. He rushed to an embrasure near the sally-port and bellowed lustily: "Tell your qualified captain if he's not gone in ten minutes, I'll blow his doubly qualified ship out of the water! Think I'll just open fire anyhow!"

The bluff worked and the Confederate schooner faded. If it had called that bluff, the whole course of the Civil War might have been different. On such narrow margins is military history constructed!

Arnold seems to have gone on the principle of hit first and inquire afterward. One day, not long after, he fired on a ship that failed to answer his signals, and came within an ace of sinking her.

She turned out to be a Federal transport coming in for coal, and hadn't understood the signals. Arnold was taking no chances on his coral reef one hundred and twenty miles from land—Confederate land at that!

The war passed, at Dry Tortugas, with many "excursions and alarums." Regiments kept coming and

going. Veritable armies of men at times crowded the tiny key. Occasional wrecks furnished thrills, as did news of two slave ships captured off Havana and brought into Key West. The exploits of the *Florida* and the *Atlanta* kept tension high. One negro regiment became insubordinate and a member of it was shot. The specter of yellow jack in Cuba gave anxious months. The diary of an officer's wife gives interesting sidelights on one phase of blockade-running in the Gulf:

One day we saw an immense steamer about five miles out, emitting dense black smoke which announced its character, as only Confederates used soft coal; and when they were running away like this one, they put in pine wood or anything they had. She was running away from a little boat that by comparison was like a pygmy. Two larger steamers were trying to head her off, and they passed out of sight in that position. All in all, it was quite an exciting affair, with 20 or 30 guns fired. . . . Next day she was brought into Key West—a large Mississippi River boat, loaded high on deck with cotton, a prize valued at half a million dollars.

How different the result had Arnold's bluff been called!

As you stand amid the silent wreckage of Fort Jefferson, it is hard to realize that this place once swarmed with activities, thrilled with hope, trembled with despair. Old letters give glimpses of its obscure history. They mention the means taken to keep up the morale of this marooned company, where human nature was put to severe test by being cooped up under such unnatural conditions. There were picnics and egg-collecting parties at Bird Key, with Chinese lanterns in the boats at night and negroes singing, pickin' on de ole banjo. Fishing expeditions, drills, band

concerts helped. Every man in the garrison who could dance a jig, sing a song, or tell a story was drafted for amateur theatricals. Thus they flogged the weary time along. Only one more picture and we pass to matters more tragic. The old diary says:

In the calm evening it is pleasant from the ramparts to watch the golden sun sink to rest, and just as it touches the edge of the horizon to hear the bugles blow retreat. Before the last note of music has died away in space, the placid rest is broken by the thunder of the evening gun. The Stars and Stripes, that have all day flaunted their glory from the sally-port, are run down, and someone, as he breaks ranks, exclaims, "Another day in for Uncle Sam!"

Now, ladies and gentlemen, for the grim part—the prison record of our great seagoing fortress. That record dates back to the early part of the Civil War. To me Fort Jefferson seems the most lonely prison in all this world. Not even the ill-favored Château d'If, immortalized by "Monte Cristo," is so solitary—for from its walls you can behold the swarming harbor of Marseilles; while from Jefferson, save for the few scattered Tortugas keys, you see only far-stretching vastnesses of the Gulf of Mexico.

Jefferson's harsh walls have at one time held more than a thousand prisoners, besides perhaps six hundred soldiers, laborers, and non-combatants. Sixteen hundred humans jammed together on one tiny, sweltering coral reef! What wonder that scurvy and plague decimated the garrison! That its busiest industry, at times, was burying the swarms of wretches who died there like flies!

Many of the convicts were deserters, bounty-jumpers, political prisoners, and tractable offenders, but no

few were murderers and hardened ruffians. Some of the workmen, too, were bad actors, both black and white, who had sought employment in this pesthole to escape the draft. Naturally enough, Jefferson became the scene of cruel events. Constant attempts at escape were made, mostly unsuccessful but now and then thrilling enough. The soldiers were practically as much prisoners as the convicts. They all suffered together, and died indiscriminately. The military prisoners were kept in the guard-house, while the general ones were herded into boarded-up casemates. But numbers of them used to prowl around all over the fort, and old narratives tell the fear of mutiny that constantly oppressed the authorities. The women-folk especially felt this dread. Communications with Key West were sporadic, and at times of pestilence nearly broke down altogether. Ugly memories still lurk about Tortugas.

Sentinels were stationed at the prison bastions, the sally-port, and the wharves. How any mere human beings could have escaped seems incredible, but they did—lots of them. I have examined some of the cells at Jefferson, cells perhaps ten feet by fifteen, near the sally-port. No bars guarded some windows, for these windows are mere slits, narrowing down from two feet on the inside of the wall, four feet thick, to less than six inches on the outside. Through such slits prisoners could see nothing but a narrow glimpse of burning sky, sea, and sand. One of the cells has such a slit communicating with the sally-port, and there you can still see where some of the bricks have been dug away.

"A man named Harry Smith got through here," my friend Lilja told me—Lilja of the *C. G.* 293. "They

couldn't keep that man, no matter what they did. Seems like he was kind of a Houdini. No handcuffs would hold him. Neither would leg irons or neck irons. He just got right out of 'em every time. Got out of his cell; too, whenever he felt like it."

Smith seems to have been a thorn in the side of Fort Jefferson authority. He was irrepressible. Even chaining him to the floor, in close confinement, was no go. His particular amusement was getting loose, wandering about at night, stealing anything he could lay his hands on, and dropping his booty into the moat. At last his captors made a wheel, with spokes but no tire, and put it on his neck, as farmers hobble a cow. Smith nonchalantly removed it. They riveted him to a wall. He strayed away just the same, and that night turned the spigot of a molasses barrel, gumming up a whole storeroom.

This resulted in more chains for Smith, but he just wouldn't stay put. One night he got him a stepladder, on which he floated over to Loggerhead Key, two and a half miles to westward. They caught him and haled him back to durance vile. Again he tried. This time he really won his liberty. His body, next morning, was washed up on the coral beach near the sally-port. Exit Smith.

"There was another one, though," narrated Lilja, "that made the grade all right. He was about as much of a Houdini as Smith. Nothing could hold him. But he got kind of tired being caught and chained up, so one night he got into the powder magazine, busted open a canister, and laid a long trail of powder out through the door. Next day there was all kinds of excitement. He admitted he'd done it.

“ ‘What’s more,’ says he, ‘you can maybe figure out what’d happen to this here fort if I did it again—and just accidentally dropped a match on the trail o’ powder!’ ”

“So it wasn’t long before he escaped from the island for keeps. You can figure it out for yourself, mister.”

The old magazine, now in ruins, gives reality to the tale; and reality is hard to achieve at Dry Tortugas. So universal is the wreckage, so stark the destruction there, that only with difficulty can the imagination re-people this tremendous desolation with a host of living, toiling, suffering humanity. An old letter from an officer’s wife—I cannot establish her identity—tells of the fort in its prison days, in what she called the torpid monotony of that island life:

On the right of the entrance is the lighthouse and the keeper’s residence. On either side are cocoanut trees. Spanish grass greets the eye refreshingly. Under the trees, long ranges of shot piled symmetrically, and great guns not yet mounted, remind the visitor he stands within one of the greatest fortresses in the United States. A well-kept, cemented walk leads from the sally-port to the officers’ quarters. In the center is a garden, in which tropical fruits and vegetables are supposed to grow. Large groups of evergreen mangroves, buttonwoods, elegant cocoa palms, with hammocks and shady seats, offer lounging places. Jasmines, morning glories, cypresses, gum trees and date palms mingle with banana trees and flowers of all kinds.

A pleasing picture, sixty years and more ago, but—as we shall see—it had its drawbacks. It held no allure for convicts determined to get them thence. One such achieved the unique distinction of dying like that old Roman emperor who expired standing up. Whereby hangs one of the most curious of Tortugas tales.

One morning toward the close of the war a sentinel, looking over the parapet, saw a man apparently standing on the bottom of the moat. As the water was about ten feet deep, this looked uncomfortable for the man. The sentinel thought he must be seeing things; but no, the man was there, right enough.

It presently developed that he was a prisoner who had the night before jumped out of a port-hole. The seeker for liberty had achieved it by the peculiar accident of getting his feet tangled in seaweed at the bottom. His body, of course, had floated upright. Around his neck was a black silk handkerchief containing a good bit of money.

The particularly ironical twist to the affair was that a schooner came in next day from Key West, bringing his release from prison.

All sorts and conditions were herded into the prison of Dry Tortugas. The greatest mystery man of them all was a fiery swashbuckler known as Colonel St. Leger Grenfell.

"He was a queer bird altogether," one William Felton told me at Key West. Felton was long a custodian at the fort, and can rock on his front porch and spin yarns about it by the hour. "Grenfell was sure one tough-lookin' customer, six foot tall, black-haired, an' with black eyes under big, bushy eyebrows. He had a tremenjous black beard, too, an' wore a red flannel shirt open at the neck, an' his pant legs tucked in high boots. Folks said he was a son of Sir Roger Grenfell—a earl, or somethin' swell like that."

If swashbuckling is any proof, Grenfell must have been at least a duke's son. He seems to have been a

soldier of fortune, a professional revolutionist, with a record of rough doings in Australia, South and Central America. He enlisted with the Confederacy, and eventually landed at Dry Tortugas as a lifer at hard labor for alleged complicity in the hotel-burning conspiracy in Chicago. The spirit of rebellion stood out in every look and gesture, like quills upon the proverbially fretful porcupine. He violated all regulations, was forever fighting, and had to be kept continually under guard.

"Yes, sir," said Felton, "an' he used to walk round with his broom over his shoulder, as proud-like as one o' these here vikings with a battle-ax. One night he got up an escape party an' bribed or forced the guard to go with him. All they had was a little open boat, an' there was a whale of a storm blowin'. By rights, him an' the rest oughta gone to the bottom, but later reports was that they made Cuba, all right."

With him went three other prisoners, among them the notorious Adair, probably the toughest bird ever caged in the fortress. This Adair had the escape habit and went on the commendable motto of Try, Try Again!

At his first attempt, accompanied by a negro, he crawled out through a gun emplacement at night, swam the moat—braving the sharks kept there for prisoners' benefit, and dodging them all, even the huge one called the Provost Marshal—then succeeded in finding a big plank.

On this plank he and his ebon comrade floated over to Loggerhead Key, again taking chances with the man-eaters that swarmed in the channel. There he stole a boat and sailed away triumphantly to Cuba.

Once on Spanish soil, with commendable enterprise he undertook to sell his African companion into slavery—which resulted in the Spaniards sending them both back to Dry Tortugas, P. D. Q., C. O. D. The fortress authorities hung a medal on him in the shape of a thirty-pound ball and chain. But Adair kept right on escaping.

"Pretty soon he got out again," said Felton, "an' with all that ironware on him floated over to Loggerhead once mo'. Didn't get a boat that time, though, an' had to hide up in the pear-prickle thickets. A corporal's guard soon rounded him up an' back to the fort he come. Third time, though, him an' Grenfell an' the others, they made it clean. Them tough old boys was just like the handle on a jug. When they went, they went quick, an' they certainly was bound for to go!"

Dry Tortugas was later selected as the only safe prison to hold that fiery and untamable spirit, Crazy Horse. This Sioux chief, you may recall, fought General Crook at the Battle of the Rosebud, June 17, 1876. Eight days later he annihilated Custer's five squadrons at the Little Big Horn. The relentless pursuit that the United States army undertook, after the Custer massacre, forced most of the Indians back to their reservations. When Crazy Horse found his forces melting away, he came in and surrendered. But he declined to be reconstructed. He wanted no friendship with the paleface.

As he seemed plotting further mischief, a close watch was kept on him. He was ordered to appear before the commander at Fort Robinson, Dakota Territory, in September, 1877. A detachment brought

him in. When he saw the guard-house and realized he was going to be locked up, he drew a knife and made a frantic break for liberty. A soldier stabbed him with a bayonet so severely that in a few hours he died. Colonel Homer W. Wheeler, in "Buffalo Days," says:

The real reason for attempting to confine Crazy Horse in the guardhouse was not made public for many years. However, a captain of the Third Cavalry stated that his troop was detailed to take the chief from the guardhouse at midnight, rush him rapidly to the railroad and convey him to Dry Tortugas, far away from all his family and friends, doubtless for the remainder of his days.

Score one for the Indian chief who escaped from the horrors of Dry Tortugas before he ever was imprisoned there!

Now and then burial squads—and they were plenty—would desert *en masse*. Prisoners were employed to take the yellow-fever victims and bury them on Bird Key, adjacent to Garden Key, where the fort is located. Regarding Bird Key, at that time, an officer's wife once wrote:

It is a rugged little island, where our dead rest, the white headboards distinct in the fading light of evening. Alas, since last year's yellow fever they are thickly crowded together, and mark where the poor young soldiers lie, far from their Northern homes.

Once over on Bird Key, burial squads found nothing simpler than to take French leave. The fortress was one day treated to a race, with the authorities coming off second best.

"Three prisoners started to row to Cuba," Felton explained, "with the only rowboat at the fort. Col-

onel Alexander, in charge there, he started after 'em in a sailboat. Nigh-hand everybody was up on the walls, watchin'. When the colonel had pretty near overhauled the runaways, I'm daggoned if the wind didn't die down. It come a dead calm. Them prisoners rowed plumb away, over the horizon, an' the colonel had to set there an' stew 'most all day in the cookin' sun, sir. Mad? Was he mad? The steam come out of his ears, sir, that's all I know!"

In view of Dry Tortugas' evil reputation as a desolate place of pestilence and tragedy, who can wonder at the desperate efforts men made to keep from being sent there, or to escape thence? Among one shipload of convicts, packed like sardines on their way south, a savage mutiny developed.

The conspirators planned to scuttle the ship, seize the boats, and get away, leaving the officers, crew, and most of the prisoners to drown.

This plot was nipped in the bud, like another on the island, when in '63 a group of desperadoes plotted to spike the guns, butcher the guards, seize a couple of schooners, and sail away, piratically bent. They had already succeeded in making a lot of knives and dirks from pieces of iron junk, when another prisoner blew on them to Colonel Alexander. This prisoner was serving a term merely for having obeyed orders too literally.

"'Twas thisaway," an old Key Wester told me: "He was in the first Battle o' Bull Run, sir, an' when the commandin' officer give the order to retreat, he never stopped till he got clear to Vermont. That was a little too fur, y'understand, so they jailed him on Dry Tortugas."

The tragic fame of Tortugas rests to-day principally on the singular turn of destiny that gave Dr. Samuel A. Mudd a life sentence there. No Greek tragedy ever moved with more relentless malice than the events enmeshing him in the consequences of the greatest crime this country has ever known.

Abraham Lincoln was fatally shot by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theater in Washington, on April 14, 1865. Booth, in jumping from the Presidential box to the stage, with his dramatic cry of "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" broke his leg. He nevertheless escaped through a rear exit, mounted a horse in readiness, and with his face disguised got away in company of David E. Herold. He endured the anguish of a thirty-mile ride into Southern Maryland, until at four o'clock next morning both conspirators stopped at the house of Dr. Mudd—ominous name!

This doctor, who otherwise would have lived and died unknown, was a well-to-do country practitioner, kindly and popular. He set Booth's leg and allowed him to rest a few hours, little suspecting what evil angels he was entertaining unaware. The conspirators presently departed and succeeded in crossing the Potomac into Virginia.

An epochal hue and cry convulsed the nation. Booth and Herold for some days evaded capture. They were at last discovered on the Garrett farm, near Port Royal.

On hearing of the assassination, the doctor's suspicions were aroused, and he informed the authorities at Bryantown, near-by. This act availed him nothing. He was taken into custody and tried by a military commission, along with Samuel Arnold, Michael



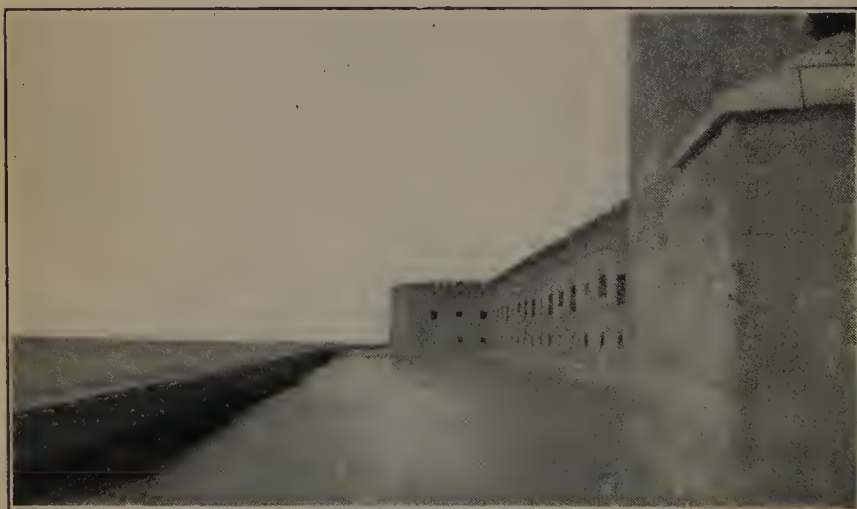
More like a medieval stronghold than an American fort.



Was this wall a target or an execution-ground?



Fishing-fleet, through embrasure broken by Dr. Mudd.



The partly sand-filled moat hides grim mysteries.

O'Loughlin, Edward Spangler, Herold, George A. Atzerodt, Mrs. Mary E. Surratt, and Lewis Payne. The latter four were hanged. The others, including Dr. Mudd, received sentences of life imprisonment. These sentences were originally to have been served at Albany, New York, but were soon changed to Dry Tortugas, "than which no more desolate place of imprisonment could have been found within the limits of the then United States."

Long before the prisoners arrived, the Tortugas knew these stirring events. An old letter of the officer's wife—already quoted—gives a picture worth recording:

On April 20th, the steamer *Corinthian* brought news of Lee's surrender on the 9th. Two hundred guns were fired, with great celebration. But while in the midst of our rejoicing . . . the *Ella Morse* came in with the flag at half-mast and the terrible news of the tragedy at Washington. The officers all went down to the wharf. . . . When I saw them walking up the path so subdued and quiet, I knew something terrible must have happened. Soon I heard a gun fired in quick, successive shots, and then saw men scurrying toward the sally-port. I could hear angry voices and low mutterings. The disturbance was caused by some of the prisoners attempting to cheer and rejoice over the death of the President, when the sentinel fired his gun and the men were tied up. . . . Half-hour guns and flags at half-mast pronounced it a day of mourning, and a weight hung over us for days. Every joy and victory seemed dwarfed by this horrible act.

Thus it was into an atmosphere heavily surcharged with the bitterest hate that the unfortunate Dr. Mudd was presently projected. The most illuminating account we have of existence at Dry Tortugas comes from letters written by Dr. Mudd to his devoted wife,

letters published by his daughter Nettie in a book now hard to get. No narrative could more tragically plumb the depths of despair. The doctor felt himself innocent of any crime save that of common humanity to an unknown sufferer. Convicted largely on negro evidence, "subjected to cruelties almost beyond the power of human endurance," he found himself the object of a bitterness more intense than any the Civil War had ever engendered.

A very frenzy of passion inflamed the public mind against him. Some victim had to be found. He happened to be that victim. Let us, however, pass this aspect of the matter and note only the facts as his letters record them.

Dr. Mudd arrived at Dry Tortugas on July 25, 1865, and was at first employed as a hospital orderly. He soon had several opportunities to escape, but "believing it would show guilt, resolved to remain peaceable and quiet." Yet knowledge of how his farm had been devastated by revengeful soldiers, and how his family had been reduced almost to beggary, preyed on his mind. All this, and the hope of "reaching some point where the writ of habeas corpus was in force, and then surrendering to the authorities so that the writ might be invoked in his behalf," shook his determination to remain passive. Another thing—he, a Southern gentleman, found himself guarded by blacks, a perfectly intolerable situation. He writes:

This place is now wholly garrisoned by negro troops, with the exception of white officers. I am lorded over by a set of ignorant, prejudiced and irresponsible beings of the unbleached humanity, which is more than I can submit to on this island of woe and misery.

The doctor, therefore, in September—with the help of one Kelly—tried to escape. He was taken from the transport *Thomas A. Scott*, aboard which he had hidden himself, and was chained hand and foot in a dungeon over the sally-port. During this excitement six other prisoners got clean away. Rumors of a jail delivery in his behalf, even of an armed company being formed in New Orleans to capture Tortugas and liberate him, increased his punishment. And presently he was put at hard labor, wheeling sand and cleaning old bricks under a cooking sun.

He soon records the prevalence of bone-break fever, akin to yellow fever and causing intense agony. At least three quarters of the inmates seem to have had it. Also:

Some 30 or 40 have made their escape, or attempted to do so, since I have been here, and there was never anything thought of them. Kelly and another man, who were bound with chains and thrown into the dungeon with me, last night freed themselves from their chains, broke out the window and let themselves down with their chains. They robbed the sutler of \$50, as much clothing as they needed and a plenty of eatables, stole a boat and made good their escape. They said the commandant was a fool to think he could hold them on this island.

Next month he writes:

Three more prisoners have escaped, taking a boat just from under the eyes of the guard in open daylight and getting eight miles before discovered, when it was useless to pursue.

He tells of being confined to a small damp dungeon with Arnold, O'Loughlin, Spangler, and Colonel Grenfell, made to wear heavy leg irons at hard labor, and kept under close guard. In December, 1865, he was

still in irons, was compelled every day to wash down the six bastions, and was allowed no communication with other inmates. He was locked in his wet room twelve hours out of every twenty-four during working days, and all day on Sundays and holidays. All the exercise he was allowed was in that dungeon and with irons on. The air from the moat was heavily impregnated with what he calls sulphuric hydrogen gas. He suffered constant pain, his legs and ankles swelled, and his hair began to fall out.

My eyesight is beginning to grow very bad. With bucket, broom and guard, I sweep and sand down the bastions. This has been my treatment for three months, coupled with bad diet and water, and every inconvenience.

Surely, the Prisoner of Chillon fared little worse!

The letters of 1866 speak often of how, conscious of his innocence, he "endures the severest privations for the most part patiently, and can stand anything, my dear wife, but the thought of your dependent position, ills and privations." The doctor mentions suffocating heat, millions of mosquitos, fleas, and even less respectable vermin that infested the whole island, and tells that these little visitors prevented all rest by day or night. The mosquitos, God wot, were soon enough to take their deadly toll! He writes that sixteen months of "the most brutal and degrading imprisonment" have done their work on him, and that he is nearly bald, is broken down, is good for nothing.

We shall presently see how this broken man's spirit leaped to serve and rescue his fever-stricken tormentors. That narrative, I think, is one of the finest in the roll of great heroisms.

Fragments of letters, here and there:

We have three sentries at our door, that cry the hours of the night at the pitch of their lungs, destroying all sleep. . . . The engineers are digging out the breakwater, which gives rise to the most intolerable stench, preventing slumber. . . . We can't move five steps from our door without being followed by a sentry. We are fed like brutes and kept in chains under close guard. Had we been ordered out and shot, it would have been much kinder than the treatment we have received. . . . We are treated in every respect as the most ferocious wild beasts. . . . We have been entirely without vegetables for a considerable period, and the rations are principally salt pork and indifferent bread.

Through all narratives of Dry Tortugas, whether from prisoners or authorities, runs this undercurrent of bad rations. True, the soldiers used to catch great sea turtles, put identifying tags on their necks—each company claiming its own catch—and keep them in the moat till wanted. They used also to collect baskets of turtle eggs at Loggerhead Key. A few fish were taken, and some pigs kept. But the usual story is of hard fare—hard, save that the butter in those iceless days had to be eaten with a spoon. The flour was full of weevils. Fruits and vegetables cost a king's ransom, with common cabbages selling at a dollar a head and other things in proportion. All this in a tropical climate.

The doctor tells of being quartered on a dirty, wet floor, in a cell that leaked dismally in every rain. He and his mates used often to dip up ten or a dozen buckets of water after a storm. They cut a hole in the floor, with little trenches leading to it, to facilitate the dipping-up process.

During the early part of '67 he was still under close guard "in this hell," and writes of how one prisoner was treated. This man was sick and applied to the garrison doctor for treatment. It was denied and the man was commanded to work. When he couldn't, they ordered him to carry a ball and chain. Unable to do this, he was tied up for half a day, then taken to a wharf with a rope lashed to him and heaved overboard. He insisted on keeping afloat, so they hitched a fifty-pound weight to his feet. Dr. Mudd reports he was an old man and suffered from dropsy. He adds:

They could not conquer him. . . . Recently a prisoner, being a little unruly, was shot and killed by a sentry. . . . A day of fortune came to him. How long shall mine be delayed?

Dr. Mudd was presently transferred to the carpenter shop, and soon thereafter a yellow-jack epidemic of extreme violence began to devastate the garrison. No more enlightening documents exist, to show the immeasurable progress medical science has made in the past sixty years, than the doctor's letters. It seems almost incredible, to us of these blithely microörganismic days, that only six decades ago nobody understood even a-b-c about bacilli and carriers. But listen:

Another case of yellow fever. Weather very calm and warm, causing no doubt the generation of the peculiar poison which gives rise to the disease. . . .

Three more cases, fatal. To prevent the spread of the disease, one of the companies has been removed to an adjacent island, and a hospital erected on another. . . . One of the officers is not expected to recover; quite a panic exists among soldiers and officers. It will most likely become an epidemic, for we have no frost here; and besides, as the soldiers' and prisoners' clothes are all woolen, this will serve as a retentive of the poison or miasma.

People in those days seemed peculiarly afraid of heavy clothes, especially if wet. Something in wet woolen cloth was supposed to harbor yellow fever, if not actually breed it. Meantime, busy little *Stegomyia calopus* of the long bill and of the fine, free hospitality for yellow-fever organisms, flitted her merrily unmolested way.

The doctor's letters soon record the death of the fortress surgeon, Joseph Sim Smith, and of Dr. Smith's little son. Nearly every man on the island became infected. The hospital became crowded and panic set in. More than half the men sent to Bird Key died there. That key became a huge cemetery. Even to-day a little digging on Bird Key, or the washing away of sand in a gale, discloses gruesome finds. The reminiscent William Felton told me in Key West regarding this:

"Yes, sir, when I was custodian o' the fort, a many and a many a time in a high tide an' gale o' wind them old Bird Key stiff's'd wash out. I've often seen coffins goin' down the channel, sir, with corpuses into 'em, an' a jolly old crew they was, mister. They was so. I don't wonder the fort was gave up. They had the yaller jack there again in seventy-three, an' it killed one man out of every three. The last time there was any big force o' men there was in eighty-eight. In them days it was what you might almost call a death sentence to be sent to Dry Tortugas, yes, sir!"

But to return to the epidemic of '67. The wretched colony was reduced to horrible straits. Despite all the sufferings and indignities that had been heaped upon him, Dr. Mudd volunteered to serve as fort physician and to take full charge of the situation. Released from

chains and dungeon, he plunged into weeks of day-and-night toil, exposing himself to every risk, ready to sacrifice his life with a heroism truly sublime. Magnanimity, self-sacrifice, could hardly attain greater heights.

The situation is sketched in one of the letters from the officer's wife to whom I have already referred:

The whole island became one immense hospital. The silence was oppressive beyond description. There were no soldiers for drill or parade, and the gloom was indescribable. Five hundred at one time would scarcely cover the list of sick. . . . Those able to move about looked like ghosts. The mercury was 104 in the hospital. . . . We seemed in some horrible nightmare. It was terrible beyond description to be hemmed in by those high, literally red-hot brick walls, with so much suffering. I could see the beds brought out, hoping for a breath of air to fan the burning brow and fever-parched lips. There was nothing to brighten the cloud of despair that encompassed the island.

Some of the prisoners were also in a desperate way with scurvy, in addition to having the yellow fever. Nearly two hundred at one time had scurvy, many dying of it. The gunboats were all ordered away from the fort; its isolation became complete. No ships dared approach the pestilential place, even to leave mail, which was hung on a long pole at Loggerhead Key by hasty visitors. Yet with unabated zeal, Dr. Mudd toiled on, trying to save his erstwhile enemies. More hospitals were built, till four in all were overflowing. The principal topic of conversation became discussions as to who would be the next victim.

Dr. Mudd's letters give, in fragmentary form, glimpses of horror worthy a Dante's pen, a Doré's

pencil. Hardly enough sound men were left to attend the stricken or bury the dead. The latter were not allowed to grow cold before being hurried off to the grave. No more honor was shown them, either officers or men, "than to the remains of a dog." They were buried at once to get rid of the infection. The greatest fear was shown of them when—as we know now—they were absolutely harmless! Thousands of dollars' worth of property, clothing, and equipment went up in smoke to destroy the supposed miasma.

"Were an enemy throwing shot and shell in here," says the doctor, "no more horrible picture could be presented."

The burial parties were allowed whisky before and after their grim task. They moved quickly. In half an hour from the time a victim died he was carried to a boat, rowed a mile to Bird Key, and buried in the sand, after which the party came back—if they didn't escape—for a round of stiff drinks.

Major Stone's wife died, and though the major was devoted to her, he stayed not even for the semblance of a funeral, but left at once. With him he took his only child, a little boy of two. The major was stricken on the way to Key West and died just as he arrived there. Terribly swift and deadly was the disease. Its victims were seized with delirium from the beginning, and many perished the same day.

Despite all horrors, Dr. Mudd remained constantly on duty, working every night until twelve o'clock or even later. At one time all the officers were dying or sick. Only ten soldiers out of the whole garrison answered roll-call.

Dr. Mudd had complete liberty of the fortress.

Guard duty was suspended. Escape became easy. But the doctor put away all thoughts of personal gain. As he says in one letter :

I have resigned myself to the fates, and shall no longer act upon my own impulse. By the hand of Providence my fetters have been broken, but I run not, preferring the fate of those around me, and to lend what aid in my power to breaking down the burning fever and giving encouragement to the death-stricken.

In October, 1867, he himself took the fever and narrowly escaped death. Partly recovered, he once more resumed such duties as he could. He even found strength to write a treatise on yellow fever—illuminating in its utter ignorance. The blind gropings of even the best-educated men, so short a time ago as 1867, are worth attention. The treatise, without one idea in the world about mosquito-netting, says in part :

The first case occurred in Company K, immediately over the unfinished moat, which at low tide gave rise to offensive odors, and to which the surgeon attributed the fever. The company was removed and the portholes ordered to be closed, to prevent the deadly miasma from entering. Being at this time a member of the carpenter shop, I aided in barricading against the unseen foe.

The germs or cause spread by continuity of matter and not by the disease. The fever followed along rows of beds and passed through a boarded partition, the planks of which were loosely nailed. One man generally wore a heavy cloak, and the poison was carried by the ferment set up in the cloak, or mechanically, by adhering fomites.

Sixty years from now may not the world likewise smile at our 1929 false reasonings from ignorant premises about infantile paralysis, cancer, and the like?

One morning a small rain cloud came up with a heavy wind, which blew directly from the hospital toward Company M. That night half the company were attacked, causing the wildest alarm and confusion. We enclosed the six casemates nearest the hospital, but the disease still spread.

Dr. Mudd's services excited the most enthusiastic praise among the surviving soldiers, who without his knowledge drew up a tremendously strong testimonial and petition for his pardon. This they sent to President Johnson, but in some mysterious way the original failed to reach Johnson's hand. And after the fever had ceased, for lack of infectible material to work on, Dr. Mudd was ungenerously degraded to his former condition.

In October, 1868, he records that his sleeping quarters were still the same miserable, wet casemate; his bed, made of moss gathered from trees, "very hard from long usage." In December he tells of his quarters being boarded up in front, making his imprisonment "more painful and odious." He was still in chains, under rigorous guard, and doing the most menial tasks.

His hardships lasted until March, 1869, when President Johnson pardoned him, as well as Spangler and Arnold. As for O'Loughlin, he had some time before died of the fever. Dr. Mudd returned home to his ruined farm in Maryland, frail, weak, and sick, never again to be a well man during the thirteen years he still survived; never destined to regain his position in the world or to retrieve his broken fortunes. At the age of forty-nine he died of pneumonia, contracted while attending a patient at night and in a severe storm.

Thus ends the strange, eventful history of the most celebrated prisoner ever confined in the Gibraltar of the Gulf. By an odd twist of fate, Dr. Mudd has achieved greater fame than the fortress itself. A blight of oblivion rests on that immense sea bastile. Most people have to be told where Fort Jefferson, in the Dry Tortugas, really is. For all its somber dramas, history has passed it by. Extraordinary forgetfulness has gathered about its time-worn turrets, where to-day the heron and the pelican soar above bastions that no longer fly the Stars and Stripes. But everybody knows at least a little about Dr. Mudd—"Oh, yes, the man that set Wilkes Booth's leg." I entertain a certain shrewd suspicion that his almost unparalleled case of innocence devastatingly punished may even have produced that classic phrase "his name was mud." And to have acquired immortality, even though so muddily—is it not more than most of us can do?

Thus let us say good-by to harsh old Fort Jefferson out there, abandoned and alone, on its coral reef in the sun-baked and storm-swept Gulf of Mexico. Farewell! Let us resign you once more to your splendid isolation, broken only by the thunder of long surfs against your battlements, the ax-blows of the looter, the mournful cries of sea fowl high above your ancient tragic turrets.

Fort Jefferson, the world's most desolate prison!

III

AMAZING ANTICOSTI

The Far Island in the St. Lawrence River Where Lumber Giants Work Strange Miracles

A VAGUE blur at the mouth of the mighty St. Lawrence took form along horizons like those of the sea. One of my French-Canadian fellow-voyagers exclaimed: "There she is, the island!" Leaning at the rail of the little *Fleurus*, on which we had been steaming some 400 miles down from Quebec, we watched a land of mystery emerging from pearly haze. We beheld the white, distant shaft of a lighthouse; shoals with heavy surf; low hills heavily forested. Then gradually we opened out Ellis Bay, intensely blue and sparkling in that August sunshine. As a wooded promontory drew back, a little town grew visible, with cranes, tall and smoking stacks, an immensely long pier; with steamers, dredges, infinitudes of floating pulpwood; and at one side a palatial villa, something like a French château—which indeed it was.

For the island was Anticosti; the town, Port Menier; the château a plaything of the late Henri Menier, French chocolate king. The whole island, in fact—town and all—was for the thirty years preceding Menier's death in 1914 his hunting and fishing

preserve, his social and economic experiment-station, his almost feudal seigniory, the largest and most curiously administered private domain in the world.

Henri Menier had the distinction of owning a whole country, just as you own your watch or golf-sticks. No other multi-millionaire has ever held in fee simple and made the laws for a country nearly as big as Porto Rico; a country one hundred and forty miles long by forty wide and with bold cliffs running up to seven hundred feet high; a country containing some three thousand square miles. It was all Menier's, with its settlements, highways, railway lines, game, fisheries; its quarries, minerals, rivers, lakes, water-powers; its muskegs, forests, hills, valleys, bays, everything! The story of Anticosti has been curious almost to the point of the fantastic. Of the many strange islands to which Fate has led me, surely I must call Anticosti one of the strangest.

"All ashore!" was the word, and all ashore we went. We landed, perhaps a hundred or so of us, in all, amid noisy activities of dredges and monster cranes, of tugs and puffing locomotives and stuttering motor-boats. French was the prevailing tongue, with English second, and Russian, Polish, and such thrown in for good measure. Lots of lively and happy-looking young men congregated on the pier. Anticosti seems to be a young men's country, with hard work and plenty of it to keep them out of mischief. You never saw such a profusion of noisy mackinaws and vociferous sweaters, such swagger corduroys, khaki, leather coats and leggings, such knickers and wild shirts and neckerchiefs, no, not even in movie circles.

What a "location" for a film drama Anticosti would be—what gorgeous color!

Our passengers were engineers, surveyors, "bushmen," and medical folk, with a sprinkle of women, all on business for the Anticosti Corporation that has now taken over the island, lock, stock, and barrel. "Sprinkle of women" well describes the situation. The dearth of femininity strikes one immediately. The island is an almost Eve-less paradise. Americans are rare birds too. I was the only American to land, that trip; and on the island I found only one of my countrymen.

Americans seldom go to Anticosti, away up there touching latitude 50. A good many don't even know where Anticosti is. And yet this island is not only a stupendous fish and game preserve, and a most fascinating social experiment, but it's also the hugest pulpwood development on the globe. The most wood is being logged off there ever undertaken in one operation. A hundred thousand cords is considered a big job. Last year Anticosti turned out 98,000. This coming winter she expects to produce 150,000. And she has some ten million cords now awaiting ax and saw, worth \$15 a cord at the mill! Figure that out for yourself. There's something gigantic under way, at Anticosti.

It was Saturday afternoon, and everybody who could get away from work had come to see us debark, for the arrival of a steamer is the big event. Such a turmoil of greetings! "Hello there, Bill!" "*Eh, bonjour, François!*" "How are you, old top?" "*Comment ça va?*" We tumbled out upon rough, new railroad tracks near the two gigantic and uproarious cranes loading a steamer with pulpwood. Presently,

herded by a busy policeman in full regalia and rubber boots, we clambered aboard a train. A flat-car took our baggage and the "bushmen"—who, by the way, aren't savages, but merely lumberjacks working in the "bush," or forest. The rest of us had the island's one, lone passenger-car, and some car it was, too; a tiny, open contraption, left from Menier's time.

Toot-toot! piped a locomotive with a whistle like a peanut-roaster. Away we rocked and rumbled toward the town and the high white cliff that flanked it; away up the longest pier in all Canada, more than three thousand feet from ships to land.

But in a minute we stopped again at a rough wooden shack for inspection.

"Any firearms to declare? Any traps?" We all had to give our names and show that traps and firearms formed no part of our possessions. Discussions grew voluble in French and English. An official wrote us all down in his little book. One has to "check in" at Anticosti. Nobody can run at large, unaccounted for, just as nobody can go there at all without very special permission. Even though Anticosti has a splendid summer climate and the most magnificent hunting and fishing, it isn't a tourists' resort, so don't try to visit the island unless strictly on business.

Toot-toot! again, and off we once more jounced toward the little settlement. "So this is Anticosti!" For years I had been dreaming about some time seeing it, this land of vague rumors and romance, far larger than Prince Edward Island, yet owned and administered in a curious way so like some of Jules Verne's imaginings. And there at last I really found myself. I got a fine kick out of that realization!



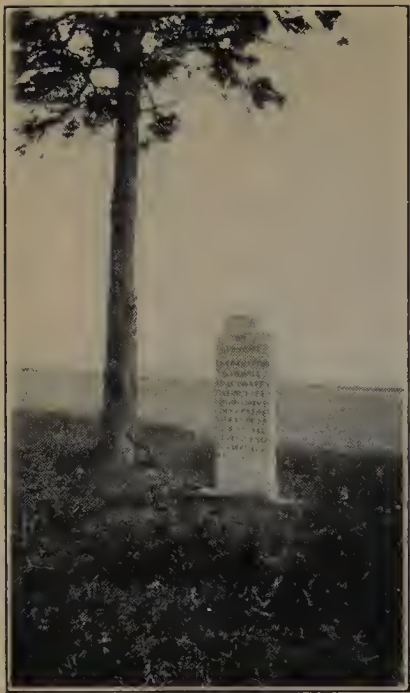
© *The Anticosti Corporation.*

Thousands of wild fowl nest on Anticosti's cliffs.



Photo by Ewing.

One hour's hunt in Anticosti brings results.



Tombstone of Gamache, the
Wizard of Anticosti.



Photo by Ewing.

Rough trails become smooth
in winter.

Brightly the northern sun lay ashimmer on gently heaving waters where gulls clamored. Aromas of brine and seaweed blent with the sweetly acrid perfume of pulpwood impounded in Ellis Bay—a sea of logs extending to vague distances. Fifty-five thousand cords of it, I later heard, were lying there; more than half a million dollars' worth. You seize immediately the keynote of Anticosti—tremendous things being done on a titanic scale.

Our special train drew up at what might be called the station, a tiny building of unpainted pine. All hands got out and began to scatter. Immediately I was taken in charge by a friendly chap, the corporation's secretary and treasurer, who had been on the lookout for me. Leslie A. Brooks by name, he's an Englishman and a "prince." He bore me off to the island manager, J. Henri Valiquette.

Waiting to see M. Valiquette in a red wooden office building, I got entertaining impressions. A stuffed arctic owl and a white-headed eagle, both natives of Anticosti, glassily regarded me. Maps, plans, blue-prints, and engineers abounded. Typewriters clicked. A telephone rang, and somebody said: "*La ligne est occupée en ce moment*," which is their politer way of saying "Line's busy!" A murmur and hum of voices filled the busy, blue-painted rooms.

Through a window I could see the passing throng of that queer, out-o'-the-world settlement, Port Menier. A chic flapper, with skirts and "bob" as short as any on Broadway, came carrying a green parasol and pegging along on the highest of heels, over rough, white, hard-packed earth. It seemed a lonely place for flappers! A priest in long black robes swished by.

Two "timber-cruisers" swung onward, with packs on back and rolls of steel tape dangling. A pair of men passed, carrying a huge basket piled high with fresh-baked loaves.

Then a dairy-wagon jogged along; four young blades in puttees and screaming sweaters lolled in a buggy drawn by a fat horse; workmen whitewashed a fence surrounding a common where luxuriant timothy, wild sweet peas, clover, and buttercups gave a New England touch. A tiny girl came pushing a soap-box on wheels, with a fat baby in the box; a clerk in blue shirt-sleeves hurried from the *magasin général*, or general store, about which—as about the unpainted little post-office—many lumberjacks were loafing. Others lay in the tall grass, industriously idling. For the mail was in, you see; and where mails come only once in a while, that's an event!

My view gave me some preliminary idea of this odd northern town, truly an outpost and frontier of white civilization; just such a place as enmeshes the imagination and as one likes to visit and to tell about. Far-off islands are always fascinating to me, because of their peculiar problems and the ways whereby people solve them—the ingenious manner in which humans, far from civilization, always somehow manage to "carry on" and make themselves at home.

Port Menier looks decidedly comfortable. The buildings, I saw, were for the most part grouped about a plaza, at the center of which rises a tall flagpole. In addition to the office, *bureau de poste* and store, there's a church, priest's house, bakery, abattoir, ice-plant, woodworking and blacksmith's shops, tractor-sheds, barracks, hotel, dwellings, convent and school,

poste de police, and *poste d'incendie*, or fire department.

Most of the structures on the landward side are painted a warm red; those to seaward are nearly all sheathed and roofed with galvanized iron. Every chimney, big or little, carries a wire-netting spark-arrester. The five locomotives are similarly guarded. These arresters and the galvanized iron offer some protection against the one surpassing peril—fire. When you dwell on an unusually windy island, together with more than 2,000 square miles of pitchy forest, fire is a topic not long absent from your mind.

Monsieur Valiquette presently received me, questioned me, gave me the freedom of Anticosti. Bilingual, cosmopolitan, a man's man all the way through, he made me feel absolutely at home, putting at my disposal every facility for information and travel. Very gratefully I acknowledge his courteous hospitality.

After a surpassing dinner at the hotel with friendly folk, some of whom seemed to have walked right out of frontier fiction, Mr. Brooks and two others volunteered to give me a run up the railroad as far as I cared to go. On our way to the railroad, what was this I saw? An auto!

"That's Monsieur Valiquette's car," Brooks explained. "The only one on the island. It's the only one in the world, I fancy, that has a filling-station all for its own particular use. And as you see, it has no number-plate."

"How's that?"

"It doesn't need any here. It isn't taxed." Nobody, by the way, is taxed at Anticosti. "This car isn't regis-

tered at all. Of course, Anticosti is under the laws of Quebec Province, but the island, town, and everything is all private property."

"Just like my back yard, at home?"

"Quite so. Precisely like your garden." And so it is. For all its immense size and its twenty-five hundred population, Anticosti still remains a "Keep Off the Grass" proposition—which introduces some of the queerest social and legal twists imaginable. "Well, here we are," Brooks added. "If you don't mind riding on a speeder."

"I don't mind riding on anything once, from a camel up—or down," said I; and so we presently got under way. "Speeders," you understand, are motorized hand-cars, and they're properly named. We had a Frenchman to operate ours, and he surely was the boy to make her hum! On rough tracks such as lead out into the Anticosti bush you hang on tight and wish you'd lived a better life.

For many miles the railroad penetrates a forest wilderness. You see signs everywhere: "ATTENTION AU FEU!" or "Look out for Fire! Don't smoke while walking or working! Be sure your camp-fire is out before leaving it!" Comparatively few signs of any kind are in English. Many of the staff-officials—thirty-five at headquarters and twenty in the bush—are French, and so are a great majority of the workmen. The percentage of those using English as their mother-tongue is small. If you don't speak French at Anticosti, you're sometimes out of luck.

Other signs warn you not to touch or molest any wild animals, especially young foxes. A little handling sometimes kills these. Posts beside the track bear the

letters "S" and "W," meaning *Sifflez* and Whistle. Our rushing motor hand-car whisked us over brawling streams and past woodland lakes incredibly rich in fish; gave us glimpses of steam-shovels at work; fire-towers on hills; wide cuttings on either side of the railway to minimize the fire-hazard; telephone lines carried on widespread tripods instead of on single poles—a fine idea where heavy gales blow much of the winter.

We passed tents, log-built lumber-camps, and many thousand cords of pulpwood all along the line. Miles of pulpwood. Much of it had been stacked on ten feet of snow the winter before. Melting, the snow had dumped it in fantastic confusions. Quantities of baled hay, too, were piled beside the track. In a land where broad fields of timothy wave five feet high it seems strange that hay should be imported for the horses that work in the woods. At one camp I saw horses hauling such hay on sleds over bare ground. Wheels are of little use and would be in constant need of renewal in that rough country.

"Princeton cache!" announced Brooks as, far up the line, we slowed and stopped at a big, unpainted building. Three or four men came out to greet us. Our arrival was an event for such isolated ones. We all unlimbered and had a chat and a smoke—in a well-sheltered place. Nobody knocked any ashes around, either, and nobody smoked while we were traveling. Always, at every elbow in Anticosti, stands a crimson and threatening specter—FIRE!

Though Anticosti is largely a limestone formation, with plenty of clay for bricks and tiles, almost the entire surface is rich black peat. One peat-bog alone

is some 160 square miles in area. Imagine if that got afire!

"Our surface-soil, called duff, is made of very fine, inflammable particles," one of the party explained. "The least spark, so small that you could drop it in a hay-loft without starting a conflagration, will on a dry day start a forest fire here. So you see our fire-hazard is worse than living in a hay-loft. We don't take any chances!"

"And we have these caches, nine of them, scattered all about," added Brooks. "Like the lumber-camps, they have 'phone connections."

"So if your main supply burns up you won't all starve to death?"

"Precisely. You see, we're totally cut off from the world, from the time navigation closes in December or so, till it opens in the spring. Last year the ice-breaker *Montcalm* got within three miles of shore, January fifteenth, and landed some freight over the ice, but that sort of thing is very uncertain. We're isolated for two or three months. No mail, no supplies. We have cable and wireless, of course, but you can't import freight that way!"

"You have to be ready to stand a regular siege, eh?"

"That is the idea. With a population like ours, and work to be kept going, we can't afford to keep all our eggs in one basket. At Port Menier and in the caches we carry six to eight months' supplies—foodstuffs, tools, hardware, spare parts for all our machinery, everything. If only two or three of our caches escaped destruction, we could still carry on. But if we were to lose everything all in one place—"

Were a thing like that to happen in winter, there'd

be the makings of a first-rate, large-scale catastrophe on Anticosti.

The hydrographic instruments kept at the caches give data as to moisture and rain-precipitation—vital factors in a tinder-box like this island. So Brooks explained, as we carefully knocked our pipes out in a damp place, trod on the ashes, and once more started along the railway. There vast *brûlés* bore witness to former raids by the great red enemy. Mother Nature had, with colorful wealths of fireweed, daisies, and other blooms, tried to enliven those mournful expanses where stark dead trees stood against the sky-line like the distorted tree-souls of suicides in Dante's seventh circle.

We traveled almost to the end of the line, through unbroken miles of forest where no ax had ever swung, till I had seen enough. On the journey back to Port Menier, men came out of camps "to see the cars go by," as it were, and give us letters to post. We met another speeder coming up-country, heavily laden with bushmen and their baggage—men going into the wilderness, there perhaps to stay until next spring, amid solitudes primeval. Hardly had we lifted our car off the irons to let the other pass, and then got under way once more, when behold! here came a "limey" pushing a train laden with cement. That meant another lift-off, and not much time to spare either. Railroad-ing in a country with few side-tracks surely has its problems.

A "limey," by the way, is a queer, double-jointed, loose-hung contraption of a locomotive. It runs on eight drivers, operated by bevel-gears and universal-joints and other things, all driven by cylinders set

amidships. Once or twice I had the honor of a special "limey" to carry me out to lumber-camps. Such engines take no prizes for speed or beauty, but they're bears for negotiating heavy curves, grades, and tonnage. Big lumbering operations find them invaluable.

Before we go any farther, why not get some historical background for Anticosti? Be not afraid, the dates are few. But note, if you will, that the name of the island is either derived from a Montagnais Indian word meaning "place where you hunt bears," or is a Spanish compound signifying "before the coast." The adventurous Jacques Cartier named it "Ile de l'Assomption" and took possession of it in 1535, for that gallant French king, François I, who immortalized himself by declaring:

Femme toujours varie;
Bien fou qui s'y fie!

More than a century later, Louis XIV gave it all to Louis Jolliet, the French-Canadian explorer who opened up the Mississippi Valley. With a country on his hands bigger than many a European principality, Jolliet seems to have been stumped. But he made at least an attempt to colonize his gigantic island. He twice wintered there, and in 1690 underwent the attack of Admiral William Phipps, governor of Massachusetts.

Phipps, with thirty-five warships and two thousand men, destroyed the fishing and Indian trading-posts, captured Jolliet and his wife, and rounded up all the settlers. The Phipps expedition, however, ended in wreck and disaster, with terrific suffering for all the

surviving attackers. To-day, at Baie Ste. Claire, one rusty old cannon from Phipps's vessel, *Rainsford*, serves as a melancholy reminder of that fruitless war. Jolliet returned to Anticosti. He died in 1700 and is thought to lie buried somewhere on the island, though none can tell you where.

After the vicissitudes of several colonizing schemes, the island still remained almost unoccupied save for a few squatters and three or four light-keepers on the south coast. Some appalling stories of shipwreck and misery are recorded in early days. More than one hundred and forty wrecks are known to have occurred on Anticosti; the unknown and unrecorded must have far exceeded those. One attempt at settlement was noteworthy because of the marvelous stock of supplies sent down from Montreal for the colonists, including—

Six quarts of violin-strings, innumerable files of all sizes, an incalculable number of coffin-handles, fish-poles and flies for fly-fishing, several thousand pounds of steel bars, also harness-buckles, iron boot-heels, anvils, carriage-steps, English saddles, and a printing-outfit . . .

but bacon was selling for a dollar a pound!

Strange that so vast an island, capable of producing wonderful crops, and fabulously rich in timber, minerals, fisheries, and furs should never—until Henri Menier took hold of it—have been successfully colonized. The climate can hardly be blamed, for Anticosti claims as mild a one as any part of eastern Canada. True, winter winds are severe, and drifts sometimes pile up sixteen feet high at Port Menier. But the same is true at the Miquelons, long since settled and with a real city of St. Pierre to boast of,

as another chapter shows. The fact remains that there was nothing doing at Anticosti till 1895; when Henri Menier bought it from the last bankrupt owners for \$125,000.

Tremendous agitation developed against letting a French citizen own such a huge, strategic island commanding the entrance to the St. Lawrence, but in time this subsided. Menier colonized with French and French-Canadians. He built Baie Ste. Claire and Port Menier; established farms and made surveys; constructed roads, railways, canals, and dams; drained swamps and lakes; stocked the island with game and preserved the native animals.

Menier conducted scientific and social experiments in the grand manner. It all seems like some Harun al-Rashid tale, or a chapter out of Utopia. He had specialists write treatises on the island's geology, fauna, and flora. One strange fact developed: Anticosti possesses forms of animal and vegetable life not found elsewhere, or found only in the arctic regions. Some of its life is known as "relict," from preglacial times.

Though nominally under the laws of Quebec, the island became practically an independent country, autocratically administered. Menier's laws simply "went," without argument. One of the strangest was a law, still in force, against the admission of any kind of dog whatsoever. Dogs, you see, might hurt the wild animals. Oddly enough, while I was on the island the captain of a collier, not knowing this law, brought his pet dog ashore; the first one in thirty years. Fido certainly made a sensation. Some of the islanders had never even seen a canine. The children cried in French,

"Oh, behold that queer, small pig!" Need I say the dog was promptly evicted?

Menier built a palatial château, the Villa. It took three years and must have cost, with furnishings, all of a million. An immense, four-story palace, it is a marvel of spacious luxury, from its regal salon to its pointed slate roofs. Such lavish and intricate magnificence I have never beheld anywhere else. At most, the great chocolate king never occupied it more than two months a year. He established numerous hunting and fishing pavilions at lakes, salmon-pools, and river-mouths. Anticosti is big enough to have lots of large rivers, such as the Jupiter, Observation, Vauréal, Oil, Becscie, and others. Menier and his friends used to visit these pavilions, sometimes using odd, flat-bottomed boats with tent-like canopies. They enjoyed fabulously rich sport.

Despite the magnate's pulpwood business, his sealing, his lobster and salmon canning, the island probably cost him \$120,000 a year—some \$2,000 a day for his hunting and fishing. Across the promontory opposite Port Menier an immense strip is cleared through the forest.

"And what's that for?" I one day asked.

"Menier had that cut," a friend told me. "He and his guests used to wait in the clearing. His beaters would drive the game out to them. They used to make some enormous bags that way." It reminds one of imperial methods. "Yes, Menier used to do things on a grand scale." He lived and labored and played like a monarch—which in fact he was.

In 1914 Menier went the way of all flesh. His brother Gaston inherited the immense island and ran

it till 1927, when he sold it to the present corporation for \$6,000,000; hardly enough to cover the cost of improvements made. Gaston Menier still for a specified time retains the right to visit Anticosti a few weeks each year; to live in the Villa at such times; to hunt and fish. Save for this transitory phase, however, the old romantic and Utopian régime has passed.

No longer is the island primarily a vast hunting-park, with other affairs subsidiary. To-day it is being surveyed, developed and worked for pulpwood. Thus does hard-headed Industry at length always displace Arabian Nights dreams! the corporation is now a huge organization supplying all its own needs. Don't think of going to Anticosti to start a business. It can't be done! The corporation feeds, warms, lights, employs, and regulates all hands; gives them medical and dental service; does everything. It owns and controls all animals, birds, furs, fisheries, mines, minerals, water-powers, ships, buildings, roads, railways—everything except the post-office, telegraph, and cable service, and the eight lighthouses. The only outside concession is a laundry, conducted by three suave Celestials.

These three form the only non-white element. Not a single negro can be found there. Anticosti is the whitest white-man's country I have ever visited. It's unfortunate the population is so unbalanced by the dearth of femininity. I should say the proportion of women was hardly 10 per cent. A few wives of officials and some of the workers, the "sisters" who conduct the convent and school, the hospital nurses, and a handful of employees make up the total of women. So the majority of Anticostites live in womanless camps or

barracks, hives of exclusively male activity. Women are at a premium, yet I have never seen a place where they enjoy such punctilious respect. It's hard to define that attitude exactly. To me it seemed as if they were treated more like friends and brothers than like women at all.

A spirit of wonderful and refreshing comradeship exists on that distant frontier of white civilization. Women tramp around in knickers, rubber boots, and all kinds of queer rigs; and as for anybody trying to flirt with them or be in any way gallant, it's unthinkable. If you want to get a new angle on the well-known man-and-woman question, visit Anticosti.

The laws in force are only slightly altered from those made by Menier. I will greatly condense them:

Anticosti is the private property of the Anticosti Corporation. Everybody must conform to the corporation's rules. No one, except in case of shipwreck, can land without permission. No one can remain, or can lodge, feed, or entertain anybody; import or export anything; have any guns, snares, nets, or traps; hunt or fish; molest or capture any animal or bird; touch any nests or eggs; own any boat or motor-car; bring any animal to the island, without permission.

No alcohol is allowed, nor any beverages stronger than 12 per cent. Anybody finding any mine, mineral, spring, wreck, or anything washed up on shore, must report it at once. Nobody can recover damages for any injury done by any wild animal. All motors must have silencers. All births, deaths, and marriages must be reported, also all contagious diseases. All persons suffering from such are to be isolated; everybody must be vaccinated; no burials can be made outside of cemeteries. Only the corporation can post notices, which no one must mutilate or remove.

The strictest sanitary regulations as to dwellings, harbor, and immigration are enforced. All imported animals are quarantined. No broken glass shall be thrown about. Without per-

mission, no bushman can leave his job and go to work for another camp; if he does, he will be paid off and deported. No fire shall be lighted outdoors, without permission. If fires are discovered, they must be extinguished; or, if beyond control, immediately reported. Anybody lighting a fire and not extinguishing it, will be deported. Adults and employers are strictly responsible for all acts of their children, wards, or employees; and in case of damage, must pay for it and pay any fines. All guards must strictly enforce the regulations.

The famous Dog Law is:

The possession or introduction of any dog, of no matter what species, is formally prohibited, dogs having been recognized as essentially harmful to the island, to persons as well as to wild and domestic animals.

Such, in brief, are the constitution and laws of this strange country. I call any country strange that has brief, practical laws which actually work, with no ifs, ands, or buts, appeals or equivocations; laws that the ordinary human being can really understand and obey. Brief, efficient, to the point, I recommend the Anticosti legal code to the Solons of larger lands. Economic determinism never had a finer demonstration—the principle that the manner in which a country makes its living determines largely its legal and moral code.

At Anticosti the government for all practical purposes is in M. Valiquette's able hands. "He saith unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to another, Do this, and he doeth it." That's all there is to it. There's no politics at Anticosti, and no voting, and no pulling of wires. The only "log-rolling" is the real kind that makes the money. Anticosti's big job to-day is getting out the pulpwood on a gigantic scale, and folks who play with fire or

rock the boat get short shrift. It's efficiency plus. While I was there, one independent young man looked as through a glass, darkly, upon too much of the 12 per cent stuff, and attempted to clamber over his fellow-men. A constable presently escorted him to the magistrate. This gentleman, who is also the customs-inspector—and who has a lock-up at his disposal—fined the independent young man \$36 and deported him. And that was *that!*

When you go "cruising" on Anticosti, it doesn't necessarily mean with a boat. No; often it signifies a plunge into the bush, the wilderness. Can I ever forget those wondrous expanses of brooding, mysterious forest? Mystery does indeed enfold them. Never yet have they been thoroughly mapped. Parts of the island are still less known than central Africa. The Canadian Government has charts showing its coast and bits of the largest rivers, but no detailed maps exist save those now being drawn by corporation surveyors aided by airmen, who report one third of the island to be barrens, peat-bogs, lakes, and rivers, while two thirds are merchantable timber.

"We get this timber out by means of contractors and jobbers," one of the three district managers explained to me, on a cruising expedition. "They contract for so much acreage or so many thousand cords, and keep big gangs cutting summer and winter."

Afar in isolated clearings we visited log camps chinked with moss and hay, camps where—if fire swept through—men and horses would have no more chance than spiders on a red-hot stove. My mentor showed me how surveys are made.

"The compass, you see, keeps us on a straight line through the forest. This 'ticker'—" and he exhibited a device like the bell-punch of a Fifth Avenue bus conductor—"registers distance. I hold it in my left hand and click it once for every so many paces. So many clicks, one mile, see?"

He showed me the running of blazed "control lines" a mile and a half apart; then the "cruising lines" at right angles, a quarter-mile apart, with blazes at start and finish of each line. He explained his estimates of spruce, hemlock, pine, balsam, hackmatack, and other woods.

"We note the water-sheds too, and the drainage areas," he expounded, "so we can plan how to get the timber out best. Away from the railroad it has to be 'driven' down to the coast, then rafted and towed to Ellis Bay. I mark the timber on a numerical scale. 'Ten' is a good normal stand, say twenty cords to the acre. 'Zero' is muskeg or barrens." The map he showed me looked like Joseph's coat of many colors, and he explained it thus:

"Dark green is good timber, light green is next best, and brown is scrubby. Blue is for lakes and rivers. Red is burnt area. These stippled places are barrens. The green lines show logging-roads and contours."

It was interesting to see him take contours in that wilderness. He did it with a "clinometer," a queer apparatus with a graduated arc, plumb-bob, and hinged mirror. The forest looked impenetrable to me, but the manager was thoroughly at home. Every two hundred feet he would take a sight on a man two hundred feet ahead of him, squinting into the little mirror. The angle of the plumb-line gave him the slope. Easy

enough, when you know how! He also noted the natural advantages for fire-protection, such as brooks, roads, and clearings.

Each manager has ten to fifteen men under him—fire-wardens, deputies, and lookouts in towers. There are also caches of shovels, mattocks, and pails. It seemed to me that if fire once got a tooth into that rich, resinous feast, nothing could stop it; but the manager talked calmly of trenching, felling trees, starting back-fires, and all kinds of expedients.

"The last fire we had," he laughed, "was when one of our watch-towers got ablaze from a stove in the living quarters and burned down!"

If you want to find yourself "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," travel into the bush with a gang of Anticosti timber-cruisers. You won't remember there's such a thing in existence as the outside world of business, debts, and worries. Push through the untracked forest, or paddle up some all but nameless river in a heavily laden canoe, with palisades of conifers and with high, stratified cliffs on either hand. Maybe your French-Canadian companions will sing some chanson of the old days when the explorers and the *coureurs des bois* first woke Canadian echoes with—

Alouette, gentille alouette,
Alouette, je te plumerai!

or else—

A la claire fontaine,
M'en allant promener,
J'ai trouvé l'eau si belle
Que je m'y suis baigné!
Lui ya longtemps que j'aime,
Jamais je ne t'oublierai! . . .

Make camp with the cruisers, hear the fresh-hooked trout sizzle in the pan, scent the perfume of the crisping bacon and the steaming coffee; then by the camp-fire smoke your pipe—and, boy! how good it tastes!—while shy northern stars peep above the somber crests of hemlock and black spruce. You'll not forget such hours at Anticosti!

Timber-cruising continues the year round. In winter, on snow-shoes and with tenting equipment only, hardy men trek out to survey, record, and plan. A rigorous life, yet the cruisers enjoy it. Everybody at Anticosti seems to enjoy the job. I've never seen a more contented, good-natured crowd, or one that pulled together with a finer spirit of coöperation. Perhaps being on their own, far from the world, draws them fraternally together. It gives them pride in the job of getting out timber, timber, still more timber. The job! That's what counts—the Big Job, man's hard work done in man's indomitable way!

There's much to tell of what my good friends showed me—the wonderful farms where I saw vegetables far excelling my own garden half a thousand miles to southward; the splendid cattle and horses; the brooks where I was allowed to cast a fly and watch the rushing ripple of eager trout. Then there's my auto trip to Baie Ste. Claire; the only trip I've ever made in the one and only car in a country.

We traveled nine miles of excellent road, and—strange!—we had to slow down for horses. Anticosti horses still fear *the* automobile. Deer by the dozen jumped across the highway, loped off with white flags raised, or stood in the tall grass, interestedly watching us. You can hardly leave Port Menier without sighting

deer, often in herds. They swarm everywhere. At night you see their eyes shining like little lanterns. I declined a shot at a deer. Shooting with a camera is good enough for me. But one of our party made a wonderful long-distance shot out of the car window. Dusk though it was, he got his deer; and later I was inconsistent enough to help eat it. Venison, by the way, sells at the public market for as low as eight cents a pound.

The greatest lack at Anticosti is social life. A billiard-table and a very small library seem inadequate for the colony. Books or magazines sent to the Anticosti Club, Port Menier, Province of Quebec, would be a godsend. There used to be a club-house, with movies and amateur theatricals; but the great influx of laborers for enlarging the pier turned it into a barracks, where swarms of men present their tickets, not now for a show but for grub, when the iron triangle is hammered.

In winter, Anticosti publishes a little weekly paper, formerly "L'Aiglon," now "The Anticosti News," with wireless despatches and personal ads. (No dog items, however, are to be found in it.) As for the club-house—

"We're going to have that back again as soon as the pier's done," say the Anticostites. "It won't be long before we're putting on plays and movies again. We've still got sixty old films from Menier's time—not too bad. Sports? Oh, we used to play a bit of hockey, but it died out. Baseball? Never had it here."

Incidentally, if somebody would only start baseball, what a blessing. Twenty-five hundred people on an island without baseball—it's all wrong. I wish somebody would send them an outfit. Or anything else, in

fact, that would divert hard-working, isolated white men and women—the whitest you ever saw!

You can't stay long at Anticosti without hearing about Gamache. Ellis Bay, indeed, where the town stands, used to be Baie Gamache. The spirit of that great, legendary figure still seems to brood over the island. Folklore up there still largely revolves about that extraordinary man, who has become a sort of tutelary demon or ogre, even a *loup-garou*.

An old French sea-captain, down in "The Hut," which is the headquarters of the Société des Trappeurs, told me something of Gamache. This Hut, where rules chief trapper Salsman, stands at the shore end of the pier, and is a shoe-cobbling establishment as well as a repository of furs, stuffed birds, guns, nets, and fishing-gear. What a setting for a movie! Pleasantly it smells of good clean leather, with whiffs of salt air and kelp blowing in over the bay. Pleasant it was, too, sitting there on an ammunition-box, smoking my pipe and listening to a grizzle-whiskered, blue-eyed old French-Canadian cap'n with a silver watch-chain almost heavy enough for a ship's cable.

"Yes, m'sieur, he was one grand character, Gamache was. He was protect' by a special devil, an' often speak with the Old Boy himself—so they tell. Some calls him one pirate, robber, evil spirit. But me, I calls him one damn smart man. *He* ain't never got—what you call? the cold foot! Smart, m'sieur!"

Picked out of the genial cap'n's narrative, here are some facts about Louis Olivier Gamache, Anticosti's patron saint—or devil, if you prefer. He was born away back in 1784, near Quebec. After years of ad-

venturing as a sailor, he settled on Anticosti where the solitude, hunting, and fishing exactly suited him. Near the site of Menier's gorgeous Villa he built himself a queer home. There he lived more than forty-five years, with a couple of servants, two successive wives, and a numerous brood of children.

His house was more than half a fort, a regular arsenal that could be solidly barricaded against a siege, for in those rude days marauders and pirates often made short work of the defenseless. His doors were of heavy oak, his walls immensely thick. On his piazza he mounted a cannon. He had a dozen guns, some of them double-barreled. Every room contained one or two of these, plus swords, sabers, pikes, bayonets, and pistols. Around his house grew up a farm, barns, sheds for storing wreckage, till he seemed to have a village all his own.

"A wonderful hunter and trapper he was, too, m'sieur. He catch seals, he fish, he trade with the Montagnais Indians on the north shore of the St. Lawrence. They like him an' fight for him. I think he give them rum for furs, which is against the law. Gamache, he make his own law! Reef, fog, gale, nothin' ever frighten that man! Every pilot and sailor know Gamache, an' some calls him in league with Satan.

"Some say they see him stand up in his schooner with a dead calm, an' command Satan to give him a wind. Then his sails fill an' away he go, m'sieur, an' all the other ships lay there. Do Gamache dispute his wicked reputation? Never! He even work to get a more worse one. That protect him, *n'est-ce pas?* Smart, he is!"

During one voyage to Rimouski, Gamache went to the inn, ordered an immense dinner, and had places laid for two.

"And who's coming to dine with you?" asked the mistress of the inn.

"Is that," he retorted, "any of your business? Never mind his name! But he's a tall, thin gentleman all in black, with a club foot. Serve dinner—and afterward keep away. Be sure not to come till you're called. Above all, no peeking!"

He shut himself into the dining-room. Soon the door opened, closed again, with no human agency that the frightened inn-folk could see. They heard Gamache talking to somebody, who answered. Terror reigned. When Gamache finally called the landlady, she almost fainted. Both places at table had been used. All the viands were gone, and what mortal man could eat so much?

Thus by dint of a stick and a string, to move the door, and at the expense of an overdistended stomach and a few verbal gymnastics, Gamache enormously enhanced the prestige of his name—and thereby increased his safety on his desolate isle.

In time he and his invisible companion were accused of wrecking ships, seizing rich cargoes, even massacring entire crews. Sailors in their forecastles and landsmen in their chimney-corners whispered parlor tales about Gamache. He became "The Wizard of Anticosti," a bogey, a figure of terror.

"Some English sailors say they rather climb up the citadel at Quebec against the French guns," my cap'n went on, "than land at Baie Gamache. Some say he roast men alive an' eat them. They tell how he act

when his first wife die. She die one winter while Gamache is away on the hunt. When he come back, with one companion, he find his two little girls near froze to death an' starved. No fire in two week, nothin' to eat but bread. That was one time when he have no servants. That *pauvre* wife, she's die all alone, except for little girls. Now she's lay froze stiff on the floor. An' Gamache, what he say? Nothin', but—

“ ‘Well that's how they goin' to find me, some fine day, *my-self*! Each one got his turn. Anyhow, she's dead, so we got to bury her up—*voilà!* ’ ”

Lonely as his fort-home was, thirty miles from the nearest neighbor and isolated from the world half of each year, Gamache found a second wife. He had more children, and, when wife number two passed on, contemplated taking a third. But Fate willed otherwise by decreeing his own death in a fitting manner, as we shall see.

Once a hostile Indian landed at the bay, and knife in hand advanced to the attack. Gamache shot the savage, but only in the leg. Thereafter he nursed and fed his enemy for six weeks, then turned him loose with the warning that if he or any other hostiles ever came again, he'd put lead through their skulls. “And,” he added, “I never miss!” Thereafter, all unfriendly redskins let him alone.

Late one autumn at Quebec, when selling his furs and laying in his winter supplies, he was boarded by a bailiff who came to arrest him. Gamache royally entertained this catch-poll; so royally that when the fuddled bailiff mounted on deck, he found the schooner already far down the mighty St. Lawrence. In vain the bailiff wept, pleading to be returned to wife and children.

Despite all, Gamache bore him off to Anticosti, where the officer passed a long and particularly severe winter. Bailiffs, from then on, gave him a wide berth.

Once when a storm drove an English pilot ashore on the island the pilot, with fear and trembling, went up to Gamache's house. There the old sea-dog heartily welcomed and dined him, showed him the arsenal, assured him "I never miss!" and finally locked him into a bedroom for the night, with this comforting farewell:

"You can sail away to-morrow—if you're alive then!"

The pilot spent sleepless and prayerful hours. About midnight Gamache unlocked the door and strode in, with brow of menace. He held a rifle in hand. And, oh horror!

"I've come to give you *le dernier coup*!" announced Gamache.

He raised the rifle—and hung it on a couple of pegs. Then, taking a bottle of brandy from his pocket, he poured the pilot a stiff drink. In French, you see, *le dernier coup* may also mean the final drink!

"Good night, friend," laughed Gamache, toasting the guest's good health. "If I come back again, shoot me. You see the devil's not as black as he's painted!"

Then there was his famous disappearance feat, when once pursued at sea. The "Compagnie des Postes du Roy" had a monopoly of fur-trading, and persecuted Gamache for dealing with the Montagnais Indians. One day a "Compagnie" ship discovered Gamache's schooner at Mingan, on the north shore, surrounded by a triple line of canoes. Gamache fled, pursued by the ship. Night fell. The ship followed

what seemed to be Gamache's light. But when the ship overhauled this, the "Compagnie" men captured only a raft surmounted by a tar-barrel with a fire burning therein.

In the dark, Gamache had given them the slip. Next day they found him back at Mingan, quietly trading, and dared not molest him. The story was whispered, and believed, that if too closely chased at sea he could vanish in a blue will-o'-the-wisp flame.

"One morning in eighteen fifty-four," my French cap'n went on, cleaning his pipe with a broom-straw, "Gamache is found dead in bed. He die at the age of seventy, white-haired but still strong an' hearty an' full of tricks. He die of drinkin' rum, m'sieur. Always he drink rum an' water, early. But that mornin' he leave out the water. The clear rum before breakfast, ah, it finish him! He is buried up there near the Villa. You can see it for yourself, m'sieur, the grave of that greatest Anticosti pioneer!"

I did indeed see his grave for myself. Under a hemlock that whispered in a breeze redolent of brine and pulpwood, with many a wild-flower nodding all about, Gamache lies under a plain wooden slab, crudely lettered. Kipling's line recurred to me—

And after all your traipsing, child, lie still!

Very soundly Gamache sleeps, yet he still seems watching over Anticosti. Mothers still quiet their young children with the threat: "Be good or Gamache will get you!" When the corporation made its first surveys, natives could not be induced to enter the interior. Men had to be brought from Esquimau Point,

on the north shore, for that work. Strange tales were whispered about direful animals inhabiting the lakes and lying in wait to seize the unwary. Weird spirits were supposed to roam the muskegs. Gamache is their leader. "Gone but not forgotten," his epitaph might well read.

So much still remains to tell about Anticosti that I'm puzzled what to leave out. If you're interested in feathers, fish, or furs, Salsman will tell you all about the island's martens, otters, seals, bears, elk, reindeer, moose, deer, and foxes—reds, silvers, and mixed. Deer have become so numerous that hundreds die every winter. Salsman claims they eat dogwood-bark, which kills them. Dr. Grenfell helped Menier introduce a herd of 100 reindeer. Forty still survive, but there's no high land or moss suitable for them. They are now probably increasing again. The black bears occasionally get so bold around the camps that they have to be killed. One peculiar breed of bear is found nowhere else than on this island. Menier brought in beavers, which have increased till now their tree-cutting and their dam work have become a dam nuisance. The young foxes are born in April; the old ones live through the winter on deer-carasses, rabbits, hares, rats and mice, and dead fish along the beaches. Anticosti is the largest fox-farm in the world.

"We've got bird-life here by the million," Salsman will tell you, concerning this stupendous game-preserve. (Incidentally, there are no English sparrows yet, nor any porcupines or snakes. A sparrowless land is agreeable.) "We have wild geese, about twenty-five species of ducks—including blacks, divers, and

mergansers—herring, mackerel, and barnacle gulls; sawbills, gannets, black-throated divers, widgeons, sandpipers, curlews, and herons; two kinds of cormorants; white-headed and big black eagles; arctic owls and ptarmigan from Labrador; partridges, larks, woodcocks, plovers, and Lord knows what-all.

"You ought to see the Bird Cliffs, at East End, mister! Ah, *there's* water-fowl for you! Millions of 'em, nesting and breeding. They scream so you can't hardly hear yourself think, and when they fly it's like a black cloud. No, sir, you can't touch a bird or an egg. The island's all patrolled. I've got forty game-wardens keeping the Gaspé and other poachers out. These wardens trap in winter, and they supply the corporation with fresh fish. We give bonuses for the best furs, and keep 'em busy."

Despite the strict game laws, provision is made for shipwrecked sailors and castaways. All along the coast shacks are scattered, each provided with beds, flour, matches, firewood, kettles and pails, stoves, and the like. Some fifty in all, they offer havens of refuge to the unfortunate. Never again can be repeated any such stern tragedy as that which followed the wreck of the *Granicus* on Anticosti, in the autumn of 1827. Crew and passengers all perished, many of them by murder. Cannibalism ran rampant, as proved by the gruesome remains found next spring—the most appalling and wholesale case of cannibalism ever known in the New World. Did space permit, what a story I could write of this; a story told me on Anticosti, and well substantiated by historical records! To-day the island guards against any such horror. Anticosti, though strict, has a heart!

"Fish?" queries Salsman. "I *guess* there's fish! Cod, haddock, herring, capelin, and mackerel, sardines, squid, eels, flounders, and halibut, sir, up to two and three hundred pounds or more. The lakes and rivers are just swarming with trout and salmon. We can some lobsters and salmon. If you like, we'll rent you a fishing-stream, anywhere from twelve hundred dollars to twenty-five hundred dollars a month. You wasn't thinking of that, was you?"

"Oh, no, no," I assured Salsman. "When I rent a stream, I want something really expensive—nothing as cheap as a mere twenty-five hundred dollars a month!"

A sportsman's Eden, that's Anticosti. But at the gate a burning sword turns every way, and none but the duly authorized may tote a gun or a fishpole. The game laws are practically independent of Quebec, and far more strict. Poaching on Anticosti might be defined as an extra-hazardous occupation.

So much for one kind of game up there. The other and far bigger kind is the game of getting out the pulpwood. Menier viewed his princely demesne less as a commercial proposition than as a wonder-place for regally entertaining his friends. To-day Anticosti is on a strictly business basis. Incalculably rich in natural resources that many years of intense labor cannot exhaust, it is wholly devoted to exploiting its 10,000,000 cords of wood. An army of bushmen are cutting this wood, sawing it up, railroading, driving, rafting, and towing it to Ellis Bay. Wonderful machinery handles it, machinery that would delight a wiser technician than I.

The wood is hauled on long trains of gigantic sleds, drawn by powerful tractors. At sea it is towed in booms. Remarkable "slash-saws," which are circular saws mounted on rafts and driven at high speed, cut it up into four-foot lengths. Extraordinary amphibious devices called "alligator-boats"—seagoing motor-boats with caterpillar treads under their hulls—coerce the wood on land or water with equal facility. You can see these queer creatures, like antediluvian monsters, shoving masses of logs about, clambering over them in the water, or climbing up on shore to drag down stranded wood by the thousand cords. You're tempted to exclaim: "There ain't no such critter!" and yet there is, and the alligators work miracles.

At Anticosti you see vast cribs and piers that have been built on the ice and then sunk to position. You see an immense boom stretching far across the harbor, and holding more than 50,000 cords impounded. In rough weather the engineers worry. If the boom breaks, maybe \$500,000 worth of wood will churn away to sea.

You find a horde of men loading the pulpwood on a fleet of chartered steamers, bound for Port Alfred, Trois Rivières, and St. Maurice. This loading is a science in itself. Electric winches haul a vast boomful of wood out of the "retaining-basin" and bring it close to the "concentrating-basin," where it is gobbled up by immense "jack-ladders" of special design. Each ladder, at its lower end, floats on an immense caisson, and each is operated by its own individual electric motor. Busy lumberjacks with long pick-poles shove unwilling logs to the ladder-chains. *Ra-cha-cha-cha!* *Ra-cha-cha-cha!* the chains clack. In a steady stream

the logs climb up the wet, clean ladders. Over they drop into the vast concentrating basin with its heavy timber walls.

Brrrrrr! Down sweeps a gigantic clamshell bucket. *Cur-rump!* It crashes into the heaving, swaying mass of logs floating three or four deep. The clamshell, reminding you of one of H. G. Wells's "Martians," lolls and sinks. *Grrrrrr!* Up it heaves again, with about a cord of logs in its hungry maw. *Whish!* and it soars on high, sluicing a very Niagara of water. It sweeps dizzily far aloft, runs over to the ship on the other side of the pier, plunges, spills its load down a gaping hatchway or on deck.

There men armed with "picaroons" swarm all over it. Picaroons are queer, pointed tools with ax-handles. The men work in one hatch or at one end of the deck, while the cranes are loading another place. After the hold is full, the toilers build up a solid deck-load nearly twenty feet high.

The cranes handle tons of logs as easily as you would manipulate a box of matches. And well they may, with their immense size and power. Each is more than one hundred feet high, and cost \$90,000 for material as well as \$20,000 to erect. Each burns six tons of coal a day, and each has three engines, totaling nearly 400 h.p., to operate and move it along its track. In twelve hours these mighty towers can load twelve hundred cords aboard a steamer. Some towers!

A mere layman, a modest and unmechanical outsider, I spent many an hour watching this vast process. Streaming smoke from the tower-tops, murky and bark-strewn waters, pungently pleasant aroma of spruce and balsam, leaping of the brown and yellow

logs—these and the clatter of busy machinery, the shouting of men far out on rafts and booms that heave in surf, deluges of gleaming spray from high aloft, massed activities of gangs toiling like ants, all make a wondrous scene.

The Romance of Industry, indeed—one song in the tremendous Epic of Lumbering!

Never have I beheld such immense masses of inert matter handled so easily, swiftly, efficiently as at Anticosti. That's part of the island's amazing contrasts. The hinterland is a tremendous wilderness. Only one per cent has been completely surveyed; not one tenth of one per cent has yet been worked. As for the rest, primeval nature still holds sway—wild beasts and birds and forest life of every sort. Yet at Ellis Bay the most modern machinery in the lumbering industry is daily working miracles on a gigantic scale. Small wonder that, once you see Anticosti, you cannot soon forget it.

Only two final pictures and my story is ended. One picture is of my last evening on the island, at the end of a calm and very lovely August day. The last faint gold and crimson are fading far over Ellis Bay. Dusk comes creeping; lights begin to twinkle on the pier; a silent steamer glides with tiny green starboard light aglow; from distant surf a murmur rises, falls. Vague figures pass. Children are laughing as they play in the tall grass; the clock in the store chimes thinly. Cigars and pipes are smoldering, and dim lights gleam in windows across the little plaza.

All at once some one exclaims: "See there!"

I look, and in the half-light see a great, proud,

noble creature walking into the settlement. Its every line and motion shows a total lack of fear, an absolute indifference to man. Immense pronged antlers branch from its high-poised head. An elk!

Quietly the elk advances, here pausing a moment to browse, there questing ahead. No one molests it. With quiet interest all watch. The elk, a big buck, moves onward. A moment it grows wondrously silhouetted against the dying gold and crimson—one of the most magnificent pictures I have ever seen. Then, onward once more, it vanishes.

That vision of the elk against the sky-line symbolizes for me the untamed wilderness life of Anticosti. The smoke forever drifting from those tall towers on the pier seems to evoke an image of the island's other phase, its tremendous industrial development. So, my second picture of farewell is down close to the towers. We are "going out," as Anticostites call leaving the island. Aboard the *Fleurus* once more and moving from the pier, tremendous rackets assail me. Whistles, sirens, pipings of locomotives, shrieks from the vast towers, whoops from dredges and tugs, stridors from our own whistle, all shatter that far northern air. Shouts mingle with the wavings of handkerchiefs. Everybody who can get away from work is down to see the boat off. For this, next to her arrival, is the one great Anticosti event.

Gradually Port Menier fades. The pier grows small, the flickering kerchiefs dim. We pass a laden pulpwood steamer all ready to clear for upriver; another just making port. The towers, topped with drifting steam and smoke like Aztec teocallis, dwindle and fade.

Now the long wooded headland advances. Our

steamer swings boldly westward, cradling on the mighty river swell. Menier's Villa is suddenly blotted out, then the town, the gigantic towers. But for a while, as the heaving vastness of the St. Lawrence receives us, I still see drifts of smoke—symbols, to me, of the island's pulsing, eager, young vitality.

That smoke, too, at length dies quite away. Anticosti has forever vanished from my eyes.

IV

GRAND CAYMAN

A One-time Pirate Island, Far at the Back of Beyond, "Where It Is Always Afternoon"

CHURCH-BELLS were musically apeal out across a gently running sea of luminous sapphire as the *Noca* cut her way along a tremendous ivory curve of dazzling coral beach. In a hush of golden tropic light she shut off power and dropped her hook, asplash, opposite Georgetown on the island of Grand Cayman. A glad moment that. Long hours we had been anxiously peering for that Land o' Dreams to lift its verdigris-green foliage out of the sun-drenched, sparkling sea. The Caribbean is so tremendous, and Cayman so tiny! Cap'n Charley had kept a man at the masthead, spying for the island's flat loom.

"I thinks I can find it," he had assured me. His engineer had encouragingly added: "He 'most always do. He's great on naviga-tin'!" But we had felt relieved when the cap'n had announced: "I see some bords from off it. 'Spects land pretty soon now!"

The "bords"—birds—had proved good harbingers indeed; and now here we were at last, better-fortuned than another captain I know of who once overshot

Cayman by a hundred miles and had a regular hide-and-peek game to find it at all. It's only an almost-awash reef hardly seventeen miles long, seven across at its widest point, and nowhere more than fifty feet above sea-level. An island where Time has for centuries stood still; where something like four thousand people have never seen a steam-engine of any kind, a railroad, street-car, printing-press, telegraph, radio, wireless, elevator, dynamo, electric light, or even a four-story building; a modern cannon, a plow, hay-rake, lawn-mower. The things Caymanians have never seen far outclass what they *have*. A list of such would almost make a dictionary. You ask yourself: "Can such a place be in this modern world?" Yes, indeed, it can. It is!

Grand Cayman, so very small and far-away, makes a fascinating study of what life must have been in times past. On some maps you can't find it at all. You've got to look sharp to locate it on any, lost in crystalline seas of lazulite and opalescence, where flying-fish skitter across gold-yellow Gulf weed, nearly two hundred miles west-by-north from Jamaica. Just a dot of an island at the Back of Beyond, it's full of the gentlest, kindest folk and the quaintest, out-of-the-world customs you can imagine. An island of flaming sunshine and glowing moon-mists, it is musical with an amazing chorus of bird-songs; an island blest with fruits, flowers, soft trade-winds—an island not merely of *mañana* but of day-after-to-morrow; an island "where it is always afternoon."

Insular officialdom bestirred itself for us, even while people ashore were waving to us from the toy-house

settlement, and while tiny, swift-sailing Indian dugouts—gaily painted and with gleaming sails—were cutting the limpid waters all about us in excited greeting. British island though it was, an American flag flickered up a pole.

"Our cook's sister, she's an American," explained Cap'n Charley, and tooted his whistle. "It's great, bein' an American! I vish ve all vas!" How many Caymanians were later to confess to me their great longing to see the Stars and Stripes fly permanently over their island! "Even though chorch is tak-in', ve got a fine crowd out!"

Fine, indeed. The straggle of red-roofed buildings under bamboos, Australian pines, and vivid emerald banana, cocoanut and mango "walks," showed a populace stirred by the animation that only an arrival or a departure can produce. So too did the landing-cove. Ships, you see, are a real event at an isle where they're seen only semi-occasionally. They furnish the one vital thrill. Long shouts of "Sail Ho!" had rung downshore, and conchs had blown over the milky jade and gold-foaming waters, from the first moment we had been sighted. And now Grand Cayman was out in full force to welcome us.

Hardly had our anchor plunged to white coral and to sponge clusters sixty feet down, but clear-seen through translucent sea like bluing-water in a porcelain tub, when with vast pomp and circumstance the quarantine boat came out. She bore an imperial crown on her bow, while astern a blood-red Union Jack blazed in the ardent sun. Her dignity might have been greater had her motor not balked. Later I found that her motor nearly always balked. Never mind; four men,

of four distinct hues, stood at long sweeps and brought her alongside. A mahogany-colored gentleman in spotless white linen and with a pith helmet boarded us, quite in the grand manner. We might have been an ocean liner instead of just a little, remodeled ex-sub-chaser from the Isle of Pines.

"All line up an' answer to yo' names!" commanded the mahogany gentleman. We lined up, passengers and crew, white, brown, and black; while overhead a fork-tailed frigate-bird soared against the incandescent sun. Presently we were rowed ashore over those most gorgeous waters streaked with gold and lavender, with emerald and sparkling ultramarine.

The landing-place, in a *barcadere* near gnarled sea-grape-trees, was just a nook where long surfs foamed from crème de menthe to milk against steps hewn in the overhanging, gray, dog-tooth coral. There we clambered out to confront eager-talking crowds on the rocks, the walls, the blinding-white roadways. After ten years of absence I once more found myself in that strange Land of Illusion, that dream-island where nothing ever happens but where all the forms are observed with rigorous punctilio.

Nothing ever happens? I must modify that. Something *had* happened! True, Georgetown was much the same as I had once before seen it: post-office in the middle; neat little houses and shops stretching along the shore; tall mast which at night, with the hoisting of a ship's lantern, becomes officially a lighthouse. But lo! a brand-new, flame-red filling station—and cars, lots of cars! Some wrecks among them, but not a few fine ones, and all American. Progress, at World's End!

"Yes, sor, we got vifty cars here now," the gas-station man assured me, "an' more com-in'. Gas is one-an'-six a gallon. An' we got an ice-cream parlor too since you vas here." Proudly he pointed it out. More Americanization!

Somehow ice-cream and autos seem a violation of the unities at Grand Cayman. But cars nevertheless now hum along the winding island roads of sand or blinding-white coral, roads so narrow that often you can't pass (on the left, of course) without backing to a turn-out. They look incongruous as a toboggan-slide down the Acropolis. The bicycles, the tiny donkeys laden with palm-woven baskets or heaped with firewood and bestridden by barefoot lads—these and the scraggy little island horses rope-harnessed to ramshackle wagons seem more in harmony with the picture. But never mind, American ideas are seeping into Cayman, just as to all the islands of the Caribbean. You might as well expect Americanization to skip any place as to think salt water and fresh won't mix.

Just a touch of regret you feel that the Juggernaut of Progress, on rubber tires, should invade the world's last nooks and corners. Yet in spite of all the autos and ice-cream, Cayman still remains tremendously isolated. You sense it in the immense, pure turquoise circle of the Caribbean fronted by tiny settlements forever drowsing in perpetual summer. Sable Island, Cozumel, the Isle of Pines, and even far Anticosti have their wireless. The world's news daily reaches them. But there's no cable or wireless at Grand Cayman. Save for the sketchiest kind of now-or-then schooner or motorship service, Cayman is wholly cut off, even from the mails.

"New York might all be knocked down by an earthquake, or Japan blown up by a volcano, and we wouldn't know it maybe for weeks," I was assured by a missionary who opened welcoming doors to us till we could rent a house. A furnished house, by the way, costs you about £2 a month or less—if you can find one at all. "We've got no hotel here, not even a boarding-house. Bakery? No, sir. One started, but soon died." Everybody, of whatever color, keeps house. If somebody doesn't take you in, you have to camp under a breadfruit-tree. Only, somebody always does take you in. Warm-hearted hospitality is still a Cayman virtue. But as the missionary was saying: "All the rest of the world might get smashed to kingdom come and we'd go right on oblivious." It makes you think of the Jules Verne romance in which a little community once got carried away on a comet. If you want to be "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," go to Grand Cayman.

Step ashore there, and you find yourself in a primitive, English-speaking civilization of perhaps the seventeenth century, back in the remote past before machinery came or banks functioned. Cayman has no bank. It wouldn't know what to do with one. If anybody gets any money—rare contingency—he buys land or a shop or a share in a schooner. Just drawing interest doesn't appeal. And aside from autos and motor-boats, the island possesses only three small machines: a tiny ice-plant that works some of the time; a little band-saw in a shipyard; and a house-lighting plant far from Georgetown. I have seen burned-out electric-light bulbs carefully saved in fishermen's huts as curios!

Any historian anxious to study society in the hand-labor stage need only go to Grand Cayman.

Bobbed hair and lip-sticks have indeed reached the island, but knickers are still considered rather scandalous; and, materially speaking, the place still slumbers. The washing-machines are dark in hue and hang their clothes on picket fences or sisal plants to dry. As for vacuum-cleaners, those are replaced by the cut cocoanut-shells with which the women polish their really beautiful floors, tinted red with native vegetable dyes and always immaculate.

And just fancy a land without movies, eh? Once a movie tried to start at West Bay, but—

"The boys hove rocks an' corals at the sail-cloth I hung up for a screen," the ex-proprietor mourned to me. "I could ha' run it with carbide lamps, but the people wouldn't make [let] me do *it*, so I had to quit." Even a modest magic-lantern show has met with opposition. Concerts, dialogues, picnics, schooner-launchings, and swimming parties are the only communal diversions. But a moonlight party in the surf, with island mermen and mermaids—from babyhood marvelous swimmers—is a diversion not soon to be forgotten. Moon-magic, gleaming beach, reefs over which sea-cavalry charges in mad-tumbling spumes asparkle—how shall mere words tell of your Cayman loveliness?

A shy and charming island girl one day summed up matters:

"All ve ever seen an airyplane is just once. No, sor, I never saw a circus, or any animals at all but horses and cows, cats and dogs and rabbits." The Cayman rabbit, in passing, is a Central American agouti. "Ve never saw a lion or tiger or elephant or any of those

fancy creatures; giraffes or such. I never saw real ice or snow, or skates or a sled or a merry-go-round or a fair, or a mountain or even a hill. Golf-sticks? Oh, no, sor. Nor a river, nor even so much as a brook, or a beauty-parlor, or a movie. I've never been off the island, but I'm long to go. Oh, I'd anticipate it grand, to travel. Ve don't see much of anything, only in books. But if I vent, I vouldn't know how to act, sir, I'm that green!"

Even books are scarce. The Cayman library is but a handful of worn-out volumes in a small dark room, presided over by a soft-spoken, friendly, and very British little gentlewoman to whom the great outer world is still a mystery. What a blessing to the Caymanians would be a few discarded books or magazines! Just "Grand Cayman, B. W. I.," will serve as an address.

You wonder what the little gentlewoman, what the charming young Cayman girl would think or do if suddenly projected into the Great White Way. Could human reactions be more dramatic?

One's own reactions are not few, on stepping back two or three centuries into that queer, archaic world, so quiet, quaint, and primitive that you rub your eyes and ask: "Can such things be?"

Walk with me (well-stared-at by the village folk) along the road on which Georgetown is strung like beads upon a thread, and you shall think yourself on a dream-island of the very long ago. A flaring, a truly violent sun-ball holds the tropic sky in its fervent glory. The blinding white glare of the coral road, hot enough to fry an egg on, makes your eyes ache. But you see, none the less, that you're in Spotless Town. Trim,

whitewashed fences inclose yards of snowy sand often decorated with tender-hued conch-shells, and always wonderfully clean. The Cayman women with their little twig brooms not only sweep their yards but also the roadways adjacent. The ever-falling litter of cocoanut fronds, of banana, almond, and breadfruit leaves, must not remain. Everywhere tangles of flowering vines drape the fences. Everywhere blossoms make smashing color contrasts—azaleas, jessamines, and oleanders, poinsettias, Jamaica Christmas-flowers, Sicilian bells, bougainvillæa, and so many more that just to name them would make a catalogue.

Date-palms nod their graceful feathers, alive with humming bees. Many-colored crotons mass about the simple little houses, for the most part perched on stilts. What cleanliness! The Cayman housewife is nigh to godliness indeed. Some of the ancient dwellings would entrance an artist, with their green hand-wrought shutters, their white, yellow, or even pink plastered walls and vertical half-timberings. An English air of seclusion dwells about many, sheltered amid tangles of tropic growths in the twisty little lanes that wander through jungly fruit-walks back of the town. The commissioner's red-roofed mansion, amid splendid grounds, offers fine hospitality that makes you think of week-end parties in the old country. You find Commissioner Hutchings—ruddy, white-mustached, jovial, and in immaculate white linen—everything that imagination can paint as a colonial administrator. You also find, here or there, fancy names painted on the lintels of gateways—Merrendale, Edensville, Dreamland, Sunnyside, McCoy's Square. "Square" means an estate. It must be cozy to dwell in a palm-shaded,

flower-smothered "square," infinitely removed from the feverish world, while forever the boom of long Caribbean surfs dull-thunder on the coral coasts or up the shining sands.

Modern improvements? Running water? Pshaw! The usual rain-water tank is far more in keeping. Who could want modernity in an environment of centuries gone?

You stroll onward, curiously noting perhaps a pair of little, sharp-eyed San Blas Indians, or half a dozen coffee-colored Hindus off some ship in the bight. None of your languages works in the least on the Indians. They don't even seem to want tobacco. You can, however, make some progress with the Hindus, for one of them talks a bit of Spanish. A tar-black negro boy passes by, a flaming hibiscus stuck behind his ear. With bare prehensile toes he picks up a nail from the roadway and transfers it to his hand, hardly slacking his pace. You wander on, regretting that the new town hall looks so modern, but enjoying the old-time school. The atmosphere in that school seems very dark. It's relieved by a few white urchins. One even is red-headed. Just as you pass, the schoolmaster is larruping the red-headed one. Coal-black schoolmaster makes a fine color contrast with his victim. But the victim seems indifferent to all. Truth be, the larruping is exceedingly mild. Nobody pays any attention. The room buzzes with reading and reciting, all together. Under the school-house a brown lad is gnawing a cocoanut. A dog is scratching fleas there in his sleep. Ho-hum! what a drowsy day!

Beneath a huge, gnarled silk-cotton-tree you find

the crumbling walls of an ancient coral fort, built no one knows when as a protection against the gentlemen adventurers who once roamed the Spanish Main. Rusty guns, taken from wrecks, lie half-buried in jungle and sand. All round the coast such defenses are scattered.

Yet, despite them, many pirates landed on Cayman, laired there, buried treasure there, and raised general high-jinks there. In those ancient days the two principal lawmakers were Pistol and Cutlass. "There weren't no Ten Commandments and a man could raise a thirst." A riotous old buccaneering, slave-holding past the Caymans surely had. Along roads leading to Bodentown you still see great stretches of coral walls, built by slave hands long since dust. Piracy, slavery, and the sinister brotherhood of wreckers all have left their traces.

An aged man, who seems to have walked right out of the days when Admirals Penn and Venables took turtle for their tall men-o'-war at Cayman, looks over the fort wall at you, and presently tobacco puts you on friendly terms with him.

"Yes, yes," he reminisces, "my grandsir often told me how lots o' deserters from Oliver Cromwell's army in Jamaica settled here. An' many a shipwrecked mariner, too. Then there was the Dutch as in 1677 burned a French fleet in Haiti an' come here with five hundred head o' niggers an' twenty-eight pounds o' gold. Lots of 'em stayed, sor, black an' white. Our early folks stopped piratin' and took to wreckin'. We was once pirates an' privateers an' wreckers an' hard-fighting men, an' there was slaves, too; but that's all done now."

Puff-puff! goes the ancient's pipe, as he squints at the sea, hardly bluer than his keen old eyes.

"Long ago, in Guineaman times, we used to lure ships ashore by false beacon fires. Ah, them wicked old days! Long ago we used to pray the good Lord to send us a ship. One time a whole chorchful o' people run out in a storm to get a wrack. The parson said: 'Brethren, wait for the benediction, an' let's all start fair!' We used to build our houses out o' such, an' fine houses too—sometimes teak an' mahogany from Indiamen. But them old days is all gone now—long, long gone."

Was there perhaps a tinge of regret in the ancient's voice? Wondrous bold and free those hard old days must have been on Grand Cayman. Now all is peaceful. So quiet has Cayman become that for more than a century only one case of homicide has been known there, and this was in self-defense.

You muse a while in the crumbling fort and then pass on. The shops seem musing too, about business that never comes and that few merchants seem to want. Apart from two or three stores where you can really buy goods, most of the Cayman emporiums appear to be merely lounging-places for mild, elderly gentlemen of charming manners, with nothing much to sell and all eternity in which to sell it. You can't buy bread or tobacco or glue or anything you want. It's the Land of "No." And making change is a complex problem, in British and American money, till you're all cluttered up with ha'pence, thruppence, sixpence, and Lord knows what. Flour, you discover, is sold by the gallon—"Six pound to a gallon, sor. And eggs, them comes by the shillin's worth, not the dozen." Maybe you decide to purchase a few "bot-

tlers," which are an obese kind of banana and good eating when they "get fit." "Fit" means ripe. "Too fit" is overripe. Mosquitos, too, are called "fit" when the rains "give 'em an invitation by water," and they hatch out "to blotch you an' begin humbuggin' the whole island, sor, till you got to use smoke-pans to live at all."

You enter a shop marked "Photographer," only to find its shelves empty save for lots of life-preservers. What life-preservers are doing as the only visible stock of a photographer you cannot imagine. But then, all of Cayman is a bit unreal and unexpected. The photographer, a molasses-tinted gentleman, is busy shaving a customer, for he combines barbering with Art.

"No, I ain't got no pict-ures o' the island," he retorts, rather peeved that you want to buy. "Go take 'em yo'self!" You thank him and pass on.

In another shop a genial aristocrat of the old school is drowsing, companioned by a chameleon and a little yellow bird. The lizard, jewel-eyed, is amusing itself by blowing a blue bag under its neck—"showing its handkerchief," as they say in Cayman. It is also passively receptive of flies. The yellow bird is actively going after flies, fluttering among the lean stock of goods. You pause for a chat.

"Who you is, sor?" the aristocrat mildly inquires. Everybody speaks mildly on Grand Cayman. Voices are soft there, sad, a little plaintive. Caymanians rarely get angry. It takes too much energy. Even when they do, they barely raise their tones. They all speak in a gentle singsong, with the queerest possible accent on the final syllables. Their words, too, are ancient. Cayman speaks an odd dialect of its own; perhaps the

speech of old Elizabethan England. It all helps the illusion that falls upon you there, the vision of remote antiquity that Cayman folds about you like a garment. Sometimes you must lend a sharp ear to grasp the meaning at all.

"Who you is, and where you stays?" queries the old gentleman, yawning. "You family [related] to anybody yur? No, just visit-*in*? Vell, it's a good place to visit. I been steamship-*pin*' once; been in other parts. But in my feel-*in*', no place please me like it do yur. 'Specially if you're in the downward go."

"I hope you don't mean you're sick, sir?"

"Vell, I been punish-*in*' [suffering] with run-down blood nigh seven year. Can't walk sturdy nor stand sturdy no more. But business don't bother me much. Days on top o' days, hardly five shil-*lin*'s. I'm glad you come to look for [visit] me. Anything I can do you, let me know. I'll see you some more."

You leave him brooding with his chameleon and his yellow bird, and wander on, feeling that somehow you have glimpsed an age infinitely remote from ours.

Everybody gives you greeting. You simply cannot remain a stranger there. As you wander along the coral shore, littered with old ships' chains, windlasses, and gear, you see the most lovely ocean vistas between the palms where small "red-leg" crabs scuttle through snowy sand. You find boats covered with cocoanut-fronds to keep the ardent sun from cracking them; Indian dugouts hollowed from a single mahogany or cedar log and wondrously modeled. All these dugouts come from Central America. You see other boats swung up on davits let into the solid coral, just as if

the island were a ship with boats hanging over her rail. Were Cayman really a ship, the sea could hardly be more omnipresent. Mightily alone in the great waters, she goes her own seafaring and peculiar ways.

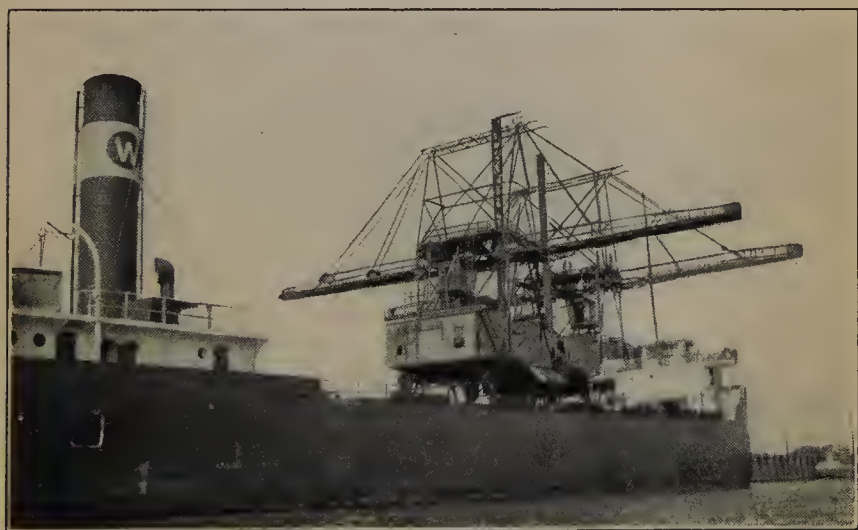
Her rope-making is a queer, primitive industry. This rope is made from the unopened tops of the thatch-palm. It's strong and durable, used for rigging vessels and many other purposes all through the Caribbean. Oddly enough, the rope-makers believe they should gather their palm-tops on the day before the full moon. They go miles for those tops, carry them home, sun-dry, and split them by hand into long "pegs" or strips. These pegs they hand-roll into strands which they "lay into rope" with a crude, triple-cranked device called a "cart." The cart is turned in one direction, while perhaps a hundred yards off a "wench" is turned in the other. A triple-grooved "bob" guides the strands as the rope is formed. It's a day's labor to get enough palm-tops for six coils of rope. Three coils a day can be "laid." The rope fetches about a cent for ten feet. Obviously rope-making on Cayman isn't overpaid.

As you wander along from the rope-walk on the beach, queer types pass you, eying you with a curiosity only equaled by your own. Here comes a tattered old one-eyed man, brown as a withered breadfruit leaf, white-whiskered and with toes sticking out of ragged tennis-shoes. From behind his bush of beard, snags of teeth protrude. You chat with him, learn that he's on his way "to buy a shil-*lin'* o' rum, sor," and assist that ambition to the extent of thruppence. A postal employee plods by with a hunk of turtle-meat dangling on a cord. "Take my por-*ter*?" asks a ragged urchin,



Photo by Ewing.

Menier's million-dollar villa now stands deserted.



Giant loading-towers fill the pulpwood steamers.



Cayman grinding-mill for rice or grain.



"Spring Forbes" is one of Cayman's influential citizens.

slyly bold. "Por-ter" seems to mean portrait, photograph. A mulatto woman, splendidly erect, strides onward with a huge basket of bananas on her head. Armed with a machete for a goad, a patriarchal negro drives a yoke of oxen, slow-plodding in flour-white coral dust.

Four merry children, of four colors, trot past on a half-portion of donkey. In a doorway you glimpse an old African crone seated on the floor, eating rice from a kettle with claw-like fingers. A colored clergyman in full clerical rig pops by you on a spitting motorcycle. You get a salute from a huge-mustached white man in a Panama hat, with starched linen clothes and a broad black silk sash whence hangs an immense silver watch-chain that might almost anchor a ship. Behold! here comes a stove-black constable with spotless white tunic, blue trousers broadly striped with scarlet, and white cap bearing the British coat of arms in silver—a figure for any artist. The pageant of life on Grand Cayman fills you with admiration. The constable, though most of his duties are connected with handling the mail, walks with importance and authority. Still, he condescends to salute you, and greatly you admire him.

As you strike into the maze of twisty and narrow lanes back of the town, you glimpse a primitive old sugar-cane grinder, then get a view of colored mamies smoking pipes as they cook in Standard Oil tins over outdoor fires in banana and breadfruit groves. An aged brown woman, barefoot and bent far forward, passes with a huge palm-fiber basket of cocoanuts on her back. The basket hangs by its strap across her forehead, Indian-fashion. Behind her trudges a grop-

ing blind man, with a basket of firewood similarly borne. Nearly all Cayman burdens are carried thus. You stop to gossip with the blind man.

"Oh, my goodness an' mercy," says he, "hard times is what I'm havin'. Makin' out pretty bad, sor, fight-*in'* for my liv-*in'*. Tuppence flour a day is 'bout all I gets. An' the lambago, too. Ah, vell. God he'p me, I'm try-*in'* for the better, not the worst. I'm lame now. A cyar run over my foot an' cripple me. Ah, God bless oonah!" as he feels your sixpence in his hand. "We must love the good Lard. He's so kind to us every way. Didn't He put it in your heart now, sor, to he'p me out?"

You notice that his footgear is fashioned from old auto-tires, lashed Japanese fashion with palm-fibers between the toes and around the heel.

"Yes, sor, wampers is what we calls such foot-*wear* now," he informs you, blinking sightless eyes, "but in the blessed Saviour's time them was called sandals." Another keynote—a profound and simple faith, untouched by any breath of modernity. Biblical language still persists on Grand Cayman. Heaven arches very near that tiny island lost in the middle of the azure Caribbean.

The Caribbean! Grand Cayman lives in and by it. Her life depends on those sun-bright, hospitable waters. Sailing, fishing, turtling, a bit of primitive agriculture and rope-twisting, and money sent home by her sons and daughters abroad—these give her all she hath. But stay, there's another item: postage-stamps. The Cayman stamps are much in demand. Oddly enough, the island's official budget shows sales

of stamps to collectors as a regular source of revenue. Last year such sales totaled £465. Still, were it not for Old King Turtle, right slim would Cayman fare.

It's something fine to see at flaming crimson dawn or in the immense golden glory of noontide, or perhaps when the mist-hazed sea glows to sunset splendor—it's an inspiring sight to behold a turtle-schooner winging home. Heeled far over by the humming trades, all canvas agleam, here she comes now deep-laden with the monstrous sea-turtles that make Cayman hearts rejoice. She's greeted by a "Sail Ho!" that rings with huge enthusiasm all the eight miles from the village of West Bay.

This "Sail Ho!" cry is a very special feature of Cayman life. The first man, woman, or child to sight a vessel always raises the hail. With a strange, long, dying fall it instantly spreads, echoed by everybody whether on the roads, in houses, shops, schools, or wherever; perhaps the quaintest, most heart-stirring cry I've ever heard. The "grape-vine telegraph" of the African jungle runs not so swiftly. Long before a vessel has dropped her hook off Georgetown, nearly all hands on the island know the great event of an arrival.

A crowd always gathers to see anything at all come ashore. I used to love that sight, with sometimes immense long-boats rowed by sweating negroes muscled like bronzes; pulling with tremendous sweeps, the blades curiously lashed to the handles. Sometimes the boats would be piled high with tropical fruits and carry a few parrots, a monkey or two, as supercargoes. But finest of all is a turtle-boat, deep-laden with huge, patient sea-monsters. Caymanians load a boat till it

threatens to sink under them, and think nothing of it. In all weathers they seem to give no thought to free-board. Sometimes they balance their sailing-canoes by hanging outboard over the windward gunwale, clinging meantime to a rope rove to the mast. Such skill in seamanship I've never witnessed anywhere else on earth. You might as well try to frighten a seal, by threatening to drown it, as a Cayman native.

Our turtles, though—alas! poor turtles, their respite is likely to be short. Even after the long voyage from Honduras or Nicaragua, lying tipped over on sweltering decks or under hatches, they find no relief. Once ashore, they presently perish at the hands of a swarthy, bare-legged executioner with an ax, himself a marvelous subject for some realistic painter. Slaughtered right on the beach, under the wall topped by the settlement's sun-dial, their blood dyes the lovely, cream-white coral boulders there. That blood runs down into the hissing snow-and-azure surf. And thereafter the waiting, watching crowd grows more eager still, for market is opened in an ancient and slat-sided building. Crimson-handed negroes in tattered straw hats and long blouses weigh out the turtle-meat on ancient, rusty scales.

Everybody, with noisy argumentation, buys a sixpence or a shilling of turtle, to be carried home in baskets or adangle on thatch-palm cords. Beef is treated in the same cavalier fashion. It can be had only on Saturday, and even then not after noon. Sixpence a pound it costs, sirloin or neck, no difference. "You pays your money, but you don't take your choice." Like the clustering cats and dogs, you get what's given you and ask no questions at the markets, some of which are just little tarpaulin-shaded tables under the sea-

grape-trees where hang the fresh beef and the ancient steelyards. Cash and carry—on a string—is the rule. Flies? Dust? Who cares! To wrap beef or turtle, on Grand Cayman would be considered an effete super-refinement.

Any break in the monotony of Cayman fare is a wondrous blessing. That's why a turtle-schooner is so enthusiastically greeted. Turtle there far excels beef. Flippers and all are eaten; even the skin is boiled into soup. There's not much variety on the island. Fish, yams, and cassava, conchs and a kind of shell-fish called "wilks"—these, with bananas and bottlers, are not very inspiring. The principal agricultural implement is a can-opener. In place of tea you often drink a decoction of lemon-grass. "Not too bad," you say, and wish you had tea. The Caymanians grate cocoanuts and squeeze out the milk, then in that milk stew their fish. They let their corn and beans get hard before eating them, and make a sort of corn-cake by soaking the corn till it's soft enough to grate off the cob, then by mixing it up with sugar, spice, and coconut-milk. They grate cassava to make their own starch. Their "bread-kind" is plantain, bottler, yam, sweet potato, cocoanut, and malanga, all cooked up together apparently; Lord knows just how. 'Twould puzzle any American housewife. Then there's an extraordinary stuff (well) named "heavy-cake," that I never dared inquire much into. I certify it as being A-One material for anchors.

No green stuff on Grand Cayman; no salads or dainties. But nobody seems to care. You don't miss what you've never had. And turtles—they satisfy. A turtle-schooner means an island feast. No wonder the "Sail

Ho!" for a home-bound turtler rings so lustily down-shore!

By no means do all the turtles go to Cayman kitchens—these same being usually little, detached buildings and sometimes only primitive "cabooes" where cooking is done in pots set on boxes of sand. Many of the huge sea monsters are sold abroad, whence Cayman derives a major share of her fortune.

"Lots of our tortle goes to the Key West market," a veteran turtler one day explained to me as we sat on a pile of mahogany ship's-knees under a mango's grateful shade. "We used to ketch 'em right round the island, yur, but now all we'd get here'd be water-sets." (A water-set is an empty turtle-net, just as a water-haul is a line without fish.) "We mostways has to go over to the Mosquitta Coast for 'em now. Our tortle-schooners is from thirty to fifty tons, with a cap'n and a crew up to twenty men. We got a dozen or more such schooners, ketch-in' mostly green and hawksbill. Greens'll average a hundred and fifty pound, though some runs to four hundred. Hawksbill, sixty to a couple o' hundred. We gets some loggerheads too, but them ain't worth much, except for mebbe a little dried meat."

He explained the rather complicated share system of payment for the catch, and added:

"Takes ten or twelve weeks for a v'yage, to get from a hundred and twenty to two hundred tortle. We goes in small boats round the cays and rocks at night and listens where the greens sleep and where they comes up to blow. Then we sets long nets for 'em, and when they're tangled, we hauls 'em back aboard the schooner. Every week-end we carries our ketch

ashore and crawls 'em among the mangras, to recruit and feed on turtle-grass."

To "crawl" a turtle is to put it in a "crawl," *i.e.*, a kraal or pen of logs, usually among mangroves.

"When the trip's up," he continued while calking-hammers from a near-by shipyard punctuated his phrases, "we stows all our turtle on board and takes 'em to Key West, or Jamaica, or here. Yes, sor, a turtle can live nigh a month out o' water. They'll die, though, if they ain't kept cool. Sometimes we dashes water over 'em or gives 'em a drink. But we don't keep the hawksbills alive at all. We kills 'em hand-runnin', dries the meat, an' sacks the shell for the Kingston market. A good hawksbill gives us four to seven pound o' shell, worth mebbe twenty-five shil-*lin's* a pound. And there's the water-white shell, worth eight pounds a pound. That's rare, though. We has to give them Nicaraguans two shil-*lin's* a head. Tortles is gettin' scarce now, an' business ain't what it used to be. Not in that, nor no other way for Cayman. No, sor, not by a long chalk!"

And he told of what business used to be, then fell into discourse—as so many Caymanians will—about Uncle Sam, toward whom so many Cayman eyes are now turning. Talking, my old turtler squinted out over the Caribbean streaked with incredible azures and long slicks of virescence, as though he could visibly behold the U. S. A., that longed-for Mecca to which so few ever attain.

Born on Cayman, you are practically chained to that rock for life, unless you go seafaring or migrate to Central America. Cayman has no separate quota, but

comes under that of Jamaica, always far in arrears. How the Caymanians long for American citizenship! It's a thought never long absent from the minds of a tremendous percentage.

King George V is the island's rightful ruler, loved in a far-off, hazy, dutiful way. The British flag flies to the tropical breezes of Grand Cayman, as also on the other two tiny islands of the group, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, all dependencies of Jamaica. At Bodentown, one of the four or five settlements, you find a little, storm-worn pillar of concrete as a monument to Queen Victoria. Once a ship's lantern crowned it, but now this splendor has vanished, borrowed perhaps by some local Diogenes. The neglected monument is symbolic of Cayman's changing allegiance. Half furtively, or perhaps right manfully and "full of strange oaths," ever so many islanders confided to me the very same wish I later heard in Jamaica—a wish that the Stars and Stripes might float in place of the Union Jack.

"It ain't that ve don't love England," was the routine story. "Ve're good British subjects. Only, vell—England's so terrible far off, an' she don't do much for us. Look at our trade! Only one steamer touched here last year, little one, two hundred an' forty ton! Goods from England is high-priced an' hard to get. Dur-*in'* the war she cut us off from American supplies. Ve uses as much American as English money now'days. Nigh all our deal-*in's* is vith the States, sor. Most of our imports is American, an' ve'd like to be, too!

"Oh, yes, our boys wolunteered in the var. Didn't have to. Ever since the big Wreck o' the Ten Sail, nigh a hundred an' fifty year ago, when ve saved the crews

of ten British men-o'-war as drove ashore here, ve been free from any draft. But fifteen of our boys wolunteered, an' six was killed. Ve loves Old England. Still and all, if ve could be like Porto Rico or the Virgin Islands—"

The pause is eloquent. To the majority of Caymanians, "America" means employment, business, prosperity. But alas! there's no Nebo whence they can descry the Promised Land. Just as a side-light on how our imperialistic, land-grabbing, and oppressive "Colossus of the North" is actually viewed in at least part of the Caribbean, the Caymanian viewpoint is instructive.

But speaking of turtles, one day a schooner-builder took me across the island to an immense bay called North Sound. There the very latest wrinkle in turtleology is developing—a natural kraal in the form of a big lagoon that makes in from the sea. I saw boatloads of immense turtles being taken from a schooner and duly impounded. Palisades of logs prevented their escape. Nearly a thousand had already been imprisoned. Turtle-grass grew in the lagoon, so the captives board themselves with no trouble at all to the owners. These owners, by the way, had built an artificial beach where the turtles could lay their eggs. All the comforts of home! Though a few sharks infest this turtlish paradise, the big lazy fellows are increasing fast.

"And the owners net 'em out as wanted, y'understand," my guide explained. "Beats goin' over to Nicaragua for 'em, don't it? Oh, ve're progress-in', even on Grand Cayman!"

If health is any sign of progress, Cayman seems al-

ready to have advanced pretty far. The birth-rate is more than thirty per thousand and the death-rate only eleven.

"Ve're healthy, sor," Caymanians rightfully boast. "Children's one of our best crops. Never have no epidemics. 'Bout the only manner of dyin' here is to dry up an' blow away."

Cayman has two very versatile doctors who recently enlivened the island by one suing the other for £2,000 "for defamatory libel and slander," while the other entered a counterclaim for £2,500 "for slander," neither medico getting a decision. There are also two dentists, one of whom mends shoes. I've walked round with this versatile gentleman and heard him hailed from various dwellings by folk "punishing" with the toothache. He takes his forceps from his pocket, enters, and presently comes out with a shilling or two—likewise perhaps a pair of shoes to heel or sole. Hospital facilities also exist in the shape of a perfectly bare shack far up the beach. There, if indigent, you may lie without any treatment whatever save by an old nurse who visits and feeds you to the extent of one-and-six per diem. One aged and destitute sailor-man died in that unutterable loneliness while I was on the island. Like all who perish in the Caymans, he was very promptly buried.

They don't keep you long there—never overnight—for Cayman has no "morticians." When you're hopeless, they start building your coffin. Provident persons sometimes buy their coffin-boards a long time before they die and keep them prudently on hand. One old fellow even had his coffin built many years ago. He's still living. I hear he occasionally sleeps in this coffin,

"to sort o' get used to it like." Eventually; why not now?

It's a quaint sight, the building of a Cayman coffin. I saw one being made in a shipyard, under the palm-trees, for a patriarch whose passing was nigh. The ship-carpenters were constructing it in leisurely fashion, while every half-hour one or another of them struck an old ship's bell that hung from a seagrape-tree. Just as if the island were a vessel, they were standing watch. Out of solid mahogany planks they were fashioning the coffin, shaping it in the old-fashioned lozenge form now extinct almost everywhere else. As they planed and hammered it, on a couple of carpenter's horses, they smoked their friendly pipes and gossiped about the valiant deeds of their old shipmate who nevermore would sail the Caribbees. I watched while they brushed their handiwork with varnish held in a half-calabash, and while they fitted it with the sail-cloth strips by which, laden, it was soon to be borne along the glaring white road.

"No, ve don't charge nothin' for build-*in'* a coffin," one of the shipwrights explained. "The family furnishes us black coffee while ve're on the job, and maybe pays for the boards, but ve gives our labor and time, neighborlike. That's the last and the least ve can do for each other yur."

And lustily his hammer clattered, its echoes mingled with the rush and boom of long, salt-odorous surf. Echoes of hammer and of sea drifted to the dying old deep-waterman near-by, the ancient mariner who soon would be sailing an infinitely longer cruise than any to the turtle-cays of far Honduras.

Neighborhood women fashion the shroud, in readi-

ness for the passing that will be signaled by the tolling of one bell at the church—the church with huge beams hand-wrought too by ship-carpenters.

“Ve makes the vindin’-sheet of a good, fine quality o’ cambric or nainsook,” a village woman explained to me. “Ve cuts a di’mond in one corner and a heart in the other, and folds the sheet so the heart goes over the face and the di’mond over the feet. Yes, sor, it’s a fact if you looks at the dead, they von’t haunt you.”

It costs only four shillings for a grave in the little snowy cemetery of sand, and nothing at all for the tender-hued conch-shells that neighborly hands set round it. Though if family pride dictates a houselike little covering of concrete and coral, that of course is more expensive. Maybe you have the tiny, hand-drawn hearse; but more likely you will be borne to your long rest by bareheaded friends. Statistics show that on the average it costs some \$360 to get yourself buried in the States. So it’s just about 360 times cheaper on Grand Cayman—an item worth seriously considering. And even though it seems a lonely place to lie for all eternity, doubtless one might slumber very soundly there, under whispering palms or sighing Australian pines beside the ever-murmuring tropic sea.

Drowsy as the island cemeteries are, they do not always woo their occupants to unbroken slumbers. Uneasy sprites are fairly common: ghosts known as “duppies,” that wander about in a casual and disconcerting manner, playing prankish tricks. They seem much like the “jumbies” one meets in other parts of the West Indies, and everybody knows a jumbie is nothing to trifle with, some even being able to change into noxious

or deadly animals. Duppies and jumbies are in fact close kin to the formidable "zombies" of the French islands. It's sure death if you let one touch you. Duppies usually have no feet, their legs stopping at the ankles or else being hidden by a kind of mist there. Their legs are of African type, long, thin; and as they stand looking at you they disconcertingly sway and weave. But they never twirl about. Invariably they face you as you approach them. With these few identifying points, I'm sure you'll always recognize a Cayman duppy.

"There's no such thing, of course," the younger generation will assure you; but even they show no great enthusiasm for lonely paths through the bush at night. The older Cayman folk know that duppies are only too real. One of the island doctors, driving home by night, not long ago had a duppy jump *spang!* into his car. It very unpleasantly happened to be the duppy of a woman who had recently hanged herself. Worst of all, it took liberties with the medical man.

"Tickled his nose with a feather, sor, that's what she done," a fisherman one day assured me, as he mended his nets on a stretch of jagged coral. "An' the doctor, he druv home so fast, he was on two wheels most o' the way."

Then, too, the mahogany gentleman who meets arriving boats once had a brush with a duppy.

"Though later he claimed 'twas only a white coat hangin' over a chair, but he fainted dead away at night when he see it. An' could a white coat make a man faint, sor? I'm askin' you! An' there's duppy animals over on Cayman Brac, too. 'May-cows,' ve calls 'em, somethin' like goats, only bigger. No matter how much

you shoots at 'em, you can't hit 'em, never. One night when an old friend o' mine pegged out, I see one myself. Leastways, I see it swing some corn I had hung up under the thatch-roof of a shed. But there's one sure vay to get rid o' duppies, all kinds. Curse 'em and they'll fade right out."

I'm going to try just that next time I meet one.

Uncle Spring Forbes knows about even more formidable Powers of Darkness than mere duppies. Uncle Spring—his real name is William Zachariah—is one of the "old bush folk, livin' up in the land," where he has "grounds" or what might perhaps be called a farm. "Ketchin' ground," by the way, means burning bush to clear land, while "makin' ground" is cultivating the tiny earth-pockets among the coral with a machete. Uncle Spring has never used a plow. Nobody ever has, on Cayman; it's impossible. Like many more, he lives in a broad domain of "banana-walks," among which he raises yams, malangas, cassavas, and still stranger products.

If you win his favor, he will maybe stop "backin' in mold" for his gardens—that is carrying earth by the basketful on his back. Or else he will "hold up from diggin' a co-*vell*," which means stop digging a watering-place for cows. Then he will sit on a red, fallen gum-elim trunk, and under the shade of his emerald palms smoke a narrative pipe. A fine, dignified, patriarchal old colored man he is, with an amazing command of English and "vith twenty-two children, sir, an' sixty-five grandchildren that I knows of."

The ghosts of pirates, no less, are what he tells you of; those and buried treasure galore, some of which

treasure he has himself already dug up and spent with huge satisfaction.

"I knows an old man down to East End, workin' one day in Sand Key Cave, found a pile o' human bones an' bury dem. Dat night a tall, slim man knock at his door.

" 'You bury some bones to-day?' ask de man. 'Vell, I come to t'ank you. Dem vas my bones. My time's nigh up for servin', an' I'll soon come an' give you all my gold.'

"What gold, you ask? When pirates bury gold, dey kill a man an' put him in de hole 'long o' de money, to vatch it. But dat East End man never try to find dat gold in de cave. He get aboard a schooner an' never come back. Dat pirate duppy scare him off his own island. Many people is told me such t'ings, an' I see plenty myself. I knows a man at Gun Bay, comin' home one night, an' he sees a feller wid a pile o' money.

" 'You wants it?' ask de feller, an' as de Gun Bay man have no bahsket, he full up his hat wid money. Next day de money all gone out o' de hat an' nothin' in it but leaves. Yas, yas, funny tricks dem duppies is up to!"

And Uncle Spring, clad in patched white canvas and with "wampers" on his bare feet, nods a wise, grizzled old head covered by an ancient felt hat.

"I an' my brother an' old Uncle Lazarus an' some more of us find money twenty-five years ago, a pile high as a field-wall. We couldn't hardly climb over it. Only me an' Uncle dare take any. It was unkind [uncoined] money, silver bars an' such.

" 'Take what you vant,' says I, but de rest was scared an' wouldn't touch a farden. As for me, I pick

it up as fast as fowl pickin' up corn. Dat money never do me nothin'. I eat it, buy land an' cows, an' never see nothin' to interfere."

"How about pirates?" I inquired, while a tree-toad shrilled in a huge gum-tree and a tick-bird, black as any crow, fluted its loud note. "Pirates, and buried treasure on Cayman?"

"Yas, yas," affirmed Uncle Spring, blowing much smoke. "Dis island full wid buried money from de old piracy an' Indiaman days. I know one Anglishman as got a load o' gold on South Keys. Nurr time, I picked up a considerable pile o' silver myself. Dat was in nineteen hundred and three. Pirate Lafitte money, dated Anno Domini seventy-seven. An' in eighteen ninety-nine, twenty-two men in a little sloop dug up a pile as shared 'em sixteen hundred dollars apiece.

"I know where dere's a pirate deposit from eighteen twelve, but I never could make up my mind to go get it. I'd lowe [love] to take you to it sometime, sir. You'll go—mebbe? My brother, he's got a pool on his land, wid lots money in it, but he's scared to drain dat pool an' he won't allow nobody else. It can't be short of bein' a lot o' money dere, but folks is 'fraid of duppies an' such. Any host o' people t'inks dis land abounds wid ghosts!"

And smiling, Uncle Spring broods in the dappled sunlight filtering through the gold-green streamers of his banana-walk.

Not only as an authority on buried treasure does Uncle Spring enjoy high regard. He's known all over the Caymans as an obeah-man, a worker of ancient African magic—the only magician, by the way, I've ever got downright chummy with. Cayman is mighty



Typical daub-and-wattle hut of the poorer Caymanians.



Turtles, "butchered to make a Cayman holiday."



"All hands to the ropes! Now, all together!"



A banana dugout furnishes dazzling color-contrasts.

respectful to Uncle Spring, with all his shuddery spells and incantations. To "be hurted," or have obeah put on you, isn't agreeable. More than two hundred years ago, old Cayman records show that obeah was practised there:

The negro Primus entered the kitchen or cook-room of James Coe, and did then and there bury within said kitchen, an egg . . . supposed to be for that diabolical Art termed Obeah. And it is ordered that he be transported, never to return on pain of death.

But times have changed, and Uncle Spring isn't transported. On the contrary, he's rewarded for his powers. An old-timer at West Bay informed me: "He can wuk obeah, I know. Get any woman he want, make plenty people walk cripple. One commissioner we have, not long ago, he believe obeah, an' was deadly 'fraid of Uncle Spring." I could well believe it, for a young lady very highly placed also told me that obeah was a reality—though only in Jamaica.

In the West Indies, even where people won't admit it on their own island, they always admit it somewhere else. But to continue with the old-timer: "Uncle Spring, he burn this, that, an' the other bush, an' wuk with snake-skin, rats' teeth, an' hide, an' he sure can put you *so*!" To "put you *so*" means to bewitch you with obeah spells.

When I broached the subject to Uncle Spring he at first only prodded the rich red earth with his machete, but finally loosened up and told me all about it. He narrated strange doings, of how he had protected many a garden and fruit-walk from robbery by "settin' obeah on it," and of making folk do his will by informing them that if they didn't, he'd "send great snakes to

consume 'em, or turn their faces backward, or make 'em fly off the island so they wouldn't know where to pitch." To "pitch" means to come down.

"Must be useful," I ventured, "to be an obeah-man."

"He-he-he!" And he clapped his old black hands together, then squinted at a bird, full-throated with song, in a banana-palm. "Dat loggerhead-bird can sing an' he can sneer, eh? He very merry dis evenin'. Oh, yas, useful to be an obeah-man. One time a white lady, she buy a hundred pounds yams from me an' say she can't pay. I say if she don't, I'll send snakes after her, an' de money come quick! I can be entertained by lots o' white gentlemen. All 'fraid o' me! Dey'll open a bottle o' wine for me, an' make [let] deir hand touch mine. Oh, dey makes somet'ing o' me, I tell you!"

"But how," I persisted—"just how do you work obeah? And what's all this I hear about snake-doctors that can send snakes to bite people any time or place; and nobody but the doctors themselves can cure that kind of bite; and all that sort of thing? What are the facts?"

"Listen!" quoth the aged African. And then, sitting on a log in that jungle which seemed like darkest Congo, he told me more than I shall ever tell anybody else. Told me something of his powers, but not all. A canny, wise old obeah-man is Uncle Spring! His secrets shall be safe with me. What I have learned from that ancient, canny, and dignified gentleman of color shall never be set down in print.

Despite all their obeah, and their descent from what old records call "divers soldiers, planters, and priva-

teers," the Caymanians' motto now seems to be "peace and a quiet life." Cayman hasn't even an escape-proof jail. The one at Georgetown is only a roofless masonry pen topped with broken bottles. Some time ago the last prisoner was an old negro, "Uncle Jim," convicted of petty theft. Did he remain in durance vile? Not he! Though possessing only one leg, he climbed out at night, stole a small boat, and—without chart or compass—sailed away boldly to Honduras!

That was no great undertaking for a man of a race that seems almost to smell its way over the ocean. "Plain navigation" took the Caymanians everywhere long before they had any instruments at all. A stick held up by night, at arm's length, and with one notch cut for the horizon while another marked the North Star, used to be all they had, to give them latitude. As for the escaping Uncle Joe, nobody ever bothered to bring him back. Nobody ever bothers much about anything on Grand Cayman.

Nothing, that is, except their schooners. *Those* are fashioned with a loving, painstaking care almost unimaginable. The Cayman builders, without engineering education, without plans, specifications, blue-prints, or machinery, construct vessels unequaled for grace, workmanship, durability, and speed. If ever ships were hand-made, it's on Grand Cayman. All that the builders have to guide them is a little whittled-out model and a rough outline of the sails sketched on a piece of board.

"Yes, sir, we don't use nothin' else," the master-builder of all, Rayal Bodden, assured me in his little shipyard. He rested a few minutes from work on the schooner taking form under big tarpaulins that shielded

it from the tropic sun. "Every timber, from the keel up, we work 'em out with adze and saw. Knees and all, they're mahogany, ironwood, fiddlewood, pompero, and such, grewed right here on the island. Hard as steel. They'll stand as long as the world lasts!

"We import our plankin', sticks, canvas, and engines from the States. Yes, sir, we cut our sails out, on the beach; step our masts with shears; rig our schooners all complete, and power 'em with crude-oil engines, right here. Paint 'em, sir; get 'em all ready for sea. With seven to ten men I can build one like this—seventy foot long, and say seventy-six ton—in nine or ten months. They're mostly all on orders, for Bluefields or other Nicaragua ports. Biggest one ever built in the Caymans was two hundred and fifty ton—a wonder she was, too. Cost a lot more in the States, such vessels would. Couldn't build 'em there, anyhow; ain't got the hardwoods. Been at it all my life, sir. Learned it from grandfather and father; and my boy, there"—he pointed at a sturdy lad drifting out a bolt—"he'll foller it up after me. Engineerin' courses? No, sir! Rule o' thumb, that's all. But these here Cayman vessels sure can sail. They sure do last!"

When, after many months of patient and loving work, one of these magnificent hand-wrought vessels is ready, all Cayman turns out to bear a hand at her wedding with the sea. Then comes the day of days, the fiesta, pilgrimage, picnic, jubilee and all combined. By the best of luck I happened to be on the island when a schooner was launched at North Side. As a revival of old-time community sport and labor, with larking, singing, feasting, and rejoicing mixed with plenty of hard work, that was a splendid object-lesson.

The builders had been "expecting" their schooner for some time, but unfavorable winds had delayed the launching. Now at last all was ready. The new vessel, with a Union Jack and two American flags whipping against a sky of blazing and unbounded azure, lay a bit drunkenly on palm-log rollers. Out in creamy surfs black men were wading, diving, fixing anchors and tackle. Such a shouting and chattering! Such excitement!

Colorful crowds gathered; girls—of whatever hue—in gayest satins and silks; young men galloping along the beach on wiry little horses; children running and falling down in the sand; cooking-fires of free dinners smoking; crowds lying in the shade of the schooner's stern, shade being at a premium on that sun-glaring stretch of shore.

Merry parties are picnicking under canvas shelters or thatched sheds. A sweating man, as he struggles vainly with a bottle, exclaims: "I'm too hot to say the Lord's prayer! Our Father who art in heaven, bring me a corkscrew!" Under a palm the orchestra is filling the heat-shimmered air with music of the strangest. Some orchestra! One black man sawing on a ribbon-decked fiddle; another beating a jungle tempo with stick and fingers on a rude home-made drum; a third twanging a guitar to the accompaniment of a fourth who clatters a pair of ox-bones. My friend the missionary is helping, too, playing a cassava-grater with a kitchen fork—and eliciting some tones you'd never believe possible.

"Man your falls!" shouts the swarthy master of ceremonies. "All hands! Gals ahold too!" It brings a vessel good luck to have the girls help launch her.

"Walk away with the rope, now! Comin' home! Walk away!"

Up the beach, sinking in shavings and chips and fine warm sand, strain a hundred islanders, white, yellow, and black, all tugging their hearts out. "She starts, she moves, she seems to—" But no, she sticks again.

"She's two blocks!" shouts the boss. "Whoa!"

Tackles have to be readjusted amid excited conference. After long confusion (for the launching takes hours), commands reëcho:

"Walk away, walk back! Walk back on her now, everybody an' the cook! Let's go!"

Even the gorgeous constable bears a hand now, and the schoolmaster too, stove-black but handsome with bamboo helmet, snowy-white linen, and big cigar. "She's gine, now! She's crack-in'!" Fiddle, bones, drum, and guitar redouble their racket; the cassava-grater rattles as never. A dark-skinned girl christens the ship by flinging against its stern a bottle of—what? Nobody knows, because the bottle is wrapped in burlap to keep pieces of glass from littering the beach.

"Now, all hands! Now—all together! An'—she's floated, now! Nothin' diff-runt!"

And hooray, boys; and hooray again! With all hands tired but happy, one more brave little Cayman vessel becomes a bride of the sea, the all-inclosing, all-important Caribbean.

Just one more picture and then good-by to Cayman with its fine, white aristocracy of hospitable, cultured English folk, its humble, friendly, cheerful substrata of brown and black. Far more has been left unsaid than said; for all the quaint scenes, odd types, good

friends would require many a thousand words. But never mind; I've given at least some glimpse of Grand Cayman the strange, the far-remote.

Our exit from Cayman was as precipitate as our stay had been calmly restful. One drowsy, purple afternoon, into the midst of my dreams echoed a "Sail! Sail Ho!" along the surf-white coral shore. A distant whistle boomed, announcing the arrival of a vessel. Tremendous event!

She turned out to be the motor-ship *Smaland*, deep-laden with gasoline and eastward bound. Cap'n Tibbetts, interviewed when he came ashore in a long-boat, proved good-natured about carrying passengers. But his ship was leaving in a few hours. Such a swift break-up of housekeeping, such a wheeling of baggage on hand-barrows never had been seen at Grand Cayman.

Dusk, after a sunset of saffron and pearl-pink across heaving golden waters, found a crowd assembled at the little barcadere to bid us farewell. Dim-seen, a melodious group of negroes sat on the wall by the old sun-dial, crooning a song. Lighted windows began to glow. Bats wove mazy patterns with their silent wings against the Milky Way; fireflies twinkled in the coming night.

An immense Indian dugout manned by powerful blacks received us and our baggage. More than a score of young folks went out with us to the ship, a mile or so offshore. We cradled over rippling dark tropical waters flecked with the riding-lights of schooners, with stars and phosphorescent "sea-fire," while the Dipper hung low to northward and the Southern Cross tilted kitelike on the sea's other rim. Surfs

grumbled in sea-caves of coral. Constellations seemed heavy with light, ripe like some sort of heavenly fruit all ready to fall into the lap of ocean. The steersman made a statuesque figure in the deepening shadows of night.

A girl, clear-throated as a lark, began singing. Others joined in, girls and fellows just like our own, at home, but there seeming so unspeakably far from what we think of as "the world." Something made me a bit pensive. Night, music, stars, and all, and then the Caribbean—mystery and longing and pain and gladness all in one—you've got to feel it yourself to understand.

The wimple of the ship's light drew nearer. We arrived at her vast black side, clambered up a rough ladder, said good-by. What's this? Flowers for us, the foreigners? Oh, ever so many thanks! And good-by, all! Shoreward the immense dugout moved, with song drifting after it in a wake of fairyland music. The fresh young voices faded in darkness—"Good night, ladies!" and "Till we meet again!" Faded, even. 'Twill be long ere ever we meet again. 'Twill be never, nevermore.

Church-bells were tolling out across the mighty waters, and from Georgetown still glimmered faint, sleepy lights of Cayman homes. On the mast at the barcadere the lantern burned, a small but steadfast star. The *Smaland's* telegraph jangled. Her engine began throbbing. Off into the Caribbean night we gathered way. Very far, the last song hushed to an echo and grew still. House-gleams all melted into the velvet dark. Last of all, the tiny lighthouse lantern dimmed and died.

Our Cayman days of purple, jade, and gold, our nights of glowing moonlight and vague dreams, had faded back forever into the starlit immensities brooding that Land of Pleasant Memories.

V

PICTURESQUE ST. PIERRE

France's Last North Atlantic Colony, a Corner of the Old World in the New

A BIT of old France lies at our very doors, in the North Atlantic; a fragment of Brittany itself. Very few Americans realize that only one day's steaming from Cape Breton they can find an actual part of Europe. My sojourn at St. Pierre and all through the Miquelon group seemed as truly French as if I'd crossed the whole wide ocean. For in the Miquelons, some fifteen miles off the mouth of Fortune Bay, Newfoundland, the old French life still uninterruptedly goes on. The people speak no patois, as in Canada or the Magdalens. On the contrary, the realest of real French is their mother-tongue; and all the habits, customs, ways of France still live.

Nearly everybody seems to think that when France surrendered Canada to England she lost all her Atlantic colonies. Even the United States Department of State, when I requested a passport, seemed not to have heard of these tiny outposts of France. Instead of papers for St. Pierre, Miquelon, they sent me some for St. Pierre, Martinique! None the less, three little islands in the north still fly the Tricolor—St. Pierre, the smallest yet the capital of the group; then Langlade

and Miquelon, which are really one island, connected by a long sand-bar. They still constitute "a fog-bound relic of the great empire France once planned for herself in this western world."

During the eighteenth century, the islands several times changed hands between France and England. But Britain's last occupancy was in 1814, and the islands are now firmly a part of France. Much-contested and historic islands, indeed! The St. Pierrais never think how close they are to British territory, or to the United States. No; they always tell you: "We are thirty-seven hundred kilometers from Brest." They feel themselves infinitely more a part of *La Mère Patrie* than of *La Côte*, as they call Newfoundland.

This is proper, for the French tradition still flows on in St. Pierre, almost uninterrupted by the Atlantic. Go to St. Pierre, on the wheezy old *Pro Patria*, from North Sydney, and you shall see truly foreign sights. My own arrival was by a treacherous little motor-boat from Grand Bank, Newfoundland. The men who brought me over those thirty miles of open sea said they were going for cattle; but as their outbound freight consisted of some barrels of empty bottles, I had me doots. A frightful gale came on; we just got through by the skin of our teeth, and that was wet, too; but we arrived. A little matter of getting drowned is a mere nothing up there. And after you reach St. Pierre, you realize that no suffering can outweigh the delights of that most fascinating outpost of France.

For there straw-stuffed sabots and wooden-soled shoes click along stony streets and quays. Tight jerseys with zebra stripes, vast corduroy trousers, rakish Basque *bérets* and crimson sashes are all the style.

Wine-shops fling their ruddy glow out into misty nights. Little dog-teams, just as in Europe, strain at laden carts. The *filles de Marie* parade in white veils behind their sacred banners, all as if France were just around the corner.

Small islands the Miquelons are, and very old. St. Pierre has been used by Basque and Breton fishermen for at least five hundred years. When Jacques Cartier cruised here—about 1536, if I mistake not—it had already been named for its patron saint of piscatorial proclivities.

Twenty-five miles north and south the islands extend, with ninety-three square miles of territory. Miquelon contains most of this; St. Pierre itself boasts a length of hardly five miles, and is high, barren, rocky. Perhaps five or six thousand folk dwell in the group. The number has fluctuated with bad times and good. In the prosperous codfishery days it reached top-notch. Then a slump in fishing, plus the World War, depressed it. Prohibition picked it up again. I understand "bottle-fishing" has done more for St. Pierre than codfishing ever did. The St. Pierrais would be the first to protest against any repeal of our Eighteenth Amendment!

A dry United States has irrigated the French colony with streams of prosperity; and people tell me there's now a real hotel—and a good one—at St. Pierre. When I was there—however, that comes later.

James B. Connolly in one of his stories gives a hint as to all this when he tells about—

"The Miquelons, where in the spring the fishing-vessels from France put in—big vessels, bark-rigged

mostly, and carrying forty or fifty in a crew." These fishermen come to St. Pierre to fit out for the Grand Banks, and arrive with wine for ballast. "In the fall they sail back home, but without the wine."

And Warren Blake, who knows the island well, thus comments:

Natural it is that such a lucky seaport abounds in cafés whose very names are idylls: the Café du Midi, the Café du Printemps, the Café Joinville. . . . Where in America but at Saint-Pierre can you drink rum at two cents a glass? Small wonder if there are many rounds poured out at the Café des Marins; greater the wonder of Saint-Pierre's relative good order and decency of general deportment. After all, it is mostly her visitors who drink her more fiery drams, for Saint-Pierre is no manufacturing city, and these islands are almost too rocky for much cultivation (though every cotter has his garden patch), and since most of her visitors are sailors of the sea, they are, for the most part, notably thirsty men!

The World War did more than to depress St. Pierre financially. It caused sixty-five of her sons to be listed in the cathedral as dead or missing. And up on the great gray barren hill behind the town a monument attests that fact, with the inscription "*Morts Pour La Patrie.*" Had our deaths here in the States been proportionate, we should have lost a million men!

Cold and misty the archipelago has ever been; some folk say that all the fogs of the Atlantic are brewed in the Miquelons! Not even warm and gay French blood can make the islands anything but melancholy. One has sad thoughts when wandering about St. Pierre. Many houses stand vacant, crumbling. Up on the *mornes*, or hills back of the town, you see the ruins of a vast barrack where once regiments of red-trou-

sered soldiers made a brave showing. Now the roof has fallen in, and empty windows stare seaward. The hospital, gutted by fire, makes a sorry picture. St. Pierre, by the way, has no adequate fire protection, and thrice has barely missed destruction. On every roof you see ladders, ready in case of need. The *graves*—fish-flakes—show far less cod a-drying, than once upon a time. Still, St. Pierre drinks its red wine and tries to smile.

On the whole, however, it's not a sprightly town. Rather, it gives you the impression of being far-off, lonesome, homesick for its much-loved France: a mournful place trying to be bright and Frenchy and gay; seeking to make the sun shine, far in those foggy northern seas—to remember vineyards, away up there in the mists and chilly reaches of the North Atlantic. You think of *Tārtarin de Tarascon's* futile attempt to found a colony in some God-forsaken island somewhere or other; do you remember the tale? Something infinitely pathetic emerges from the attempt of the brave French spirit still struggling to carry on in that harsh environment. "The Guard dies, but never surrenders!"

Dominating the port, the Vierge de la Falaise stands to give her blessing to all such as have business upon the great waters. Higher still, an enormous, storm-blackened *calvaire*, or crucifix, looms against the sky-line. You can marvel at St. Pierre; you can ponder. It's all unspeakably strange. Too bad the world has passed it by!

As you reach St. Pierre, the gray old town rises at the end of the Barachois, or inner harbor—a true Norman or Breton city, tiered up along the treeless,

rock-bossed hills that swell like mighty waves of granite from the ever-restless northern sea—

But I am wandering from my arrival. So much is there to tell about the place that digressions are inevitable. I was drenched and half-frozen, too—despite my oilskins—when I got there. In dripping sea-gear I ascended into the town and sensed foreign things. Beloved music of the tongue that since childhood has been to me as my own; two-wheeled little French baker's wagon; Basque ox-driver crying "*Hu dià*" as he waved his magic wand, all proclaimed this as no part of the Anglo-Saxon world. The ox-team was especially fine: the animals joined by a carved and tasseled head-yoke padded with sheepskin, the wain having ponderous solid wheels. And all about me, too, the buildings cried: "This is French!"—buildings with outward-swinging windows, with slated roofs sloping steeply toward street and wharf. Yes, on this high rocky islet, black, mossy, and naked of trees, a bit of France, indeed!

As I looked about, the customs-man told me I needn't bother to transport my brine-soaked ditty-bag and trunk to the *douane*, and released me without so much as the formality of a chalk-mark. At that time I didn't even have to show my passport. Next day, however, I presented it. The day after that I had to pay a franc at the *gendarmerie*. As the authorities didn't possess change for a ten-franc note, I had to go still another day, when they happened to have enough official funds on hand to give back nine francs, or, at current exchange, ninety cents. This is surely doing business in the grand manner at St. Pierre!

My immediate care, after planting rubber-booted

foot on the fog-damp quay, was to seek lodgings. Everybody was very talkative, and nobody could give any definite information—all in the very best of French. Inquiries for hotels developed the cheering fact that there weren't any.

"There are, however, monsieur, cafés where perhaps one might find one's self not badly, eh? *Par exemple*, monsieur, the Café de France, the Café du Midi, and so on, is it not?"

The cafés didn't look inviting, and charged rates that indicated their opinion of all Americans as millionaires; therefore, I scouted up steep and rocky streets for some private roof to shelter me. After a good deal of knocking at cautious doors, I found a large-souled widow with five children, who admitted me to the family circle.

In a condition of moist disreputability as to both person and effects, I entered the house of Lenormand, a cozily hospitable French ménage, white-plastered, with tall chimney-stacks, hinged windows, geraniums in the usual window-boxes bravely displayed to the occasional sun, and a little shop below-stairs. Here the doorbell jangled as merrily as in Old Brittany; the laces made by the charming Mademoiselles Lenormand were on sale, and one might well have thought one's self three thousand miles overseas. The house of Lenormand had as puffy beds with as comfortably red eiderdowns, as Gallic bread-and-cabbage soup, and as pleasant wine as any in France. From crucifixes to hair-cloth sofa and artificial flowers, from gilt clocks and wedding-wreath of waxen orange blossoms under glass to crayon portraits and bridal photographs, the establishment possessed quite the proper atmosphere.



Photo by Briand.

Women of New France "making the cod."



Photo by Briand.

French codders at St. Pierre weighing their fish.



Photo by Briand.

French schooner unloading salt at St. Pierre.

This atmosphere, like that in all good French houses, was certainly not to be contaminated by any such peril as night air. Anybody who has ever been in France will understand.

"It is very dangerous, monsieur," kindly madame warned me, "the air of night. If you insist on sleeping with the window open, you will become ill. I had a nephew once who slept with the window open, and he became *poitrinaire*. He is dead, the poor man! We others, we keep out the bad air. In the autumn we seal up our windows, and do not open them till spring. That is safer, is it not?"

In her psychology as in everything else, the gray old town still remains wholly French; though she has her own stamps (the designs, a seagull and a bearded fisherman's head in a sou'wester), and her money is more Newfoundland, Canadian, and American than of the old country. Not only in her architecture, her unpaved streets with faucets at the corners, her ambitious quay with its dry fountain and its broken band-stand, her government house and her *gendarmerie*, her cathedral and the *place* in front thereof, but even more in her inner life, her thought, language, viewpoint, and envisagement of the world, she remains faithful to type. True, some western ideas have crept in. She plays football with zest, eats American provisions and canned goods, and has abandoned the dowry system, substituting therefor the well-crammed chest of linen year by year prepared for the sometime bride. But such details are trivial.

The people still drink their *apéritifs*, kneel in their really fine cathedral where *ex voto* models of ships de-

pend from blackened beams, mow their fields with straight-snathed scythes of monstrous blade, wash in little boxes by casual brooks, paddle their clothes with a stick, bake their huge round loaves—and thereafter handle them with the greatest unconcern about dirt—all in the good old French way.

Stand at any corner; for instance, there where the little shrine in the wall holds a gaily painted Virgin, or where the ancient pharmacy exposes its bottles and is a druggist's shop, not a catch-all department store; and every moment brings you the real European atmosphere. At your back, perhaps, stretches a blind wall where some police-battered sailor has indignantly chalked: "*A bas les flics!*" Or it may be that ragged posters hang there—grandiloquent political appeals to this or that party of the island's lively factions; denunciations of rivals in terms that we should consider actionably libelous; or the expression of thanks to voters for their patriotism and intelligence in having elected Monsieur Un Tel to some important office of the municipality. Again, you see notices of auctions of houses, schooners, or wrecks, or of tombolas to be held for various worthy ends. Once there used to be a newspaper at St. Pierre, "*La Vigie*," but it died the death; and now the billposter is the only means of publicity—he and the town crier, "sublime in his uniform and heralding his approach with a fanfare upon his glistening bugle." As you stroll on the Quai de la Roncière you will see ancient men sitting on the hugest of anchors, in pale and foggy sunlight, mumbling over the colony's departed grandeur; Breton boys wheeling barrowloads of salt to warehouses, where local black-eyed belles in huge sabots are toiling; great shaggy dogs

in harness, trotting with bread-carts. If a hard round loaf or two falls into the mud, what matter? All the driver need do is pick the bread up, wipe it on his blue smock, toss it into the cart again; and no one the wiser or the worse.

You will see gorgeous gendarmes in the authentic uniforms of Paris; a government house with the Tri-color bravely floating in that chill northern air—a strange exotic for those regions!—sailors and fishermen with clipped bullet-heads, purple socks, and rough sabots, singing, dancing, playing the accordion in cafés that look like cutthroat dives, but are really so law-abiding that they close very early in the evening. Here wiseacres cluster about the cable-office bulletins that are their only newspaper; there a rusty battery of four guns points toward Newfoundland; yonder, aged grandmothers hobble on crooked canes, going to mass, with ancestral shawls around bent shoulders.

Much of St. Pierre's social life clusters about the Place de la Cathédrale, and about religious processions, in which street altars are still set up. The one big day, of course, is July fourteenth, when St. Pierre parades, has military band concerts, rifle-practice, and flag-waving, and captures the Bastile all over again. On one such occasion a bold gunner tried to fire one of the four cannons; but something went wrong, and the gunner had to be fished out of the harbor, in pieces. As it was all fishing, however, nobody took the adventure amiss.

In the foggy Miquelons you will hear brave tales of heroism. At Grand Miquelon a vast dune extends across what was once a ship channel. Some vessels still try, in nights of fog or tempest, to sail the ancient

way; so the sands are ribbed and whitened with ships' skeletons and dead men's bones.

There's just one real farm in the Miquelons, La Ferme de la Chapelle. There, nestled down among the dunes, an ancient French house, salt-grayed and gale-buffed, clings to massive foundations. The daughter of that farm holds a medal of honor from the French Government—a tricolor ribbon, with oak leaves, monsieur—for having, single-handed, saved the lives of four English sailors in a terrible December storm. That story would fill pages; but we've no time for it now. Hardy women in the Miquelons, as well as men!

As you stand waiting on some steep cobble-stoned corner, you see a little boy approaching, bare-legged, swinging a loaf in a knitted bag. He stares at you, as all the children do, and drags his bread in the street. But no matter about that. He doesn't in the least mind bacteria, any more than the loaf-dropping sailors. Disease-germs aren't recognized at St. Pierre!

Geese waddle past with the becoming gravity of their race. They love to parade the streets, and give up this diversion only to indulge in a greater one—that of walking on clean clothes that housewives have spread on the few scant patches of grass; a sport also enjoyed by dogs, hens, cows, goats, and pigs. Wiser women hang their wash over the ubiquitous fences of slender vertical spruce poles brought in from Newfoundland. No matter where the live stock travels, nobody seems to care. Everybody lives together in Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.

A damsel hurries past, throwing no indiscreet

glances at you, the foreigner. Her dark eyes and lithe form are French as French can be. Then comes *grand-mère*, hobbling to mass on her cane, in her best kerchief or bonnet and ancestral shawl—to mass at the cathedral, where a splendid Suisse in gold braid and cocked hat raps with his brass-headed bâton on the stone floor, and lowers his dignity a bit later to collect your centimes in a couple of little plush bags. Next day he lowers it still more, to drive oxen; and you find your Suisse is really a Basque, with crimson sash and trousers of the baggiest.

A trio of boys call you “Anglishe” and beg for cigarettes. When you explain that you are American, they touch their caps and apologize, “*Pardon, m’sieur!*” No, St. Pierre does not wish to insult the good friend, the American, by mistaking him for a Briton. America is the cornucopia of all good things. American prohibition—has it not been proved a Golconda to the islands? And, moreover, has America ever passed any villainous Bait Act, to strangle St. Pierre? Never, monsieur! About this Bait Act, this iniquitous British weapon against the St. Pierrais, we shall in due course learn more.

You wander down to the waterfront again, noting as you go the primitive hand-turned lathe in the pulley-maker’s shop; the flayed calf’s head hanging in the butcher’s window; the unintelligible jargon of a Breton sailors’ group loafing by a wine-shop; the huge straw horse-collar of yonder nag—a collar whereof the type originated perhaps in Finistère, five hundred years ago. Shop-windows reveal an odd jumble of flags, hooks, squid-jigs, soap-powder (at fifty sous a box), marine stores, awful French tobacco (the worst in the

world, I think), and such delicacies as *graisse normande* and cookies that cost you five sous apiece.

The English influence is apparent in such signs as *beurre en tobes* and *medling* (middlings), and in the make-up of the merchandise; but still, the French atmosphere is hardly diluted thereby. Betimes you see pitiful attempts at flower and kitchen gardens, perhaps by the use of earth brought from Newfoundland. One good wife is telling another, over a fence, and with a wealth of gestures and adjectives, how some thieving sailors from a trawler last night raided her lettuces and cabbages. "Ah, name of a name, the sacred pigs!"

A brawny Banks fisherman stops you in the style of the Ancient Mariner and informs you that he has General Joffre tattooed on his chest and Sarah Bernhardt on his back, which you may inspect for a slight *pourboire*. You take the art gallery on credit and slip the mariner a franc, wherewith he hastens to the nearest wine-shop. His heavy walk is made heavier still by his huge clumping boots. You hear accordions in the wine-shop. One is also playing out there somewhere in the fog, among the tangle of masts and spars that fill the upper end of the Barachois. The fog chills your marrow; so into the wine-shop you drift, to see and to hear how these good St. Pierrais amuse themselves.

Very little sporting life you discover there. The St. Pierre cabarets are strictly virtuous establishments, albeit very wet. They all have to close at 8 P.M. sharp—and how can much deviltry be hatched by 8 P.M.? St. Pierre lacks in many things; but of smoky cafés, which delight the artistic soul of man, she hath no

lacking. Nor have these cafés any dearth of refreshments to the weary seafarer. Yet drunkenness is the rarest of vices. The St. Pierrais and the visiting sailor go to the café to sip, and talk, and smoke, and write, and discuss cod and prices and sweethearts and the exchange of the franc, and betimes to dance together—bearded and rough they be—to the strains of an accordion played by a fellow in a striped sweater and sabots, seated at the bar. They go, too, early of a foggy morn, when the chill gets into the blood, for their matutinal coffee and brandy, which serve only too many St. Pierrais for all breakfast. But they do not go to get drunk.

If you think of visiting St. Pierre to escape H. C. L., my advice is "Don't!" for the good old days of low prices have departed with a vengeance. Fluctuations of the franc form the vital topic, because the rate of exchange spells prosperity or ruin. The banks post this rate in their windows every morning, and anxious folk go to see what the day will bring forth. The sign "*J'achète les dollars*" in shop windows proves that speculators manipulate the exchange to their own benefit. Some are said to have made their fortunes thereby; but many of the people have suffered grievously, because most of their supplies come from the States, and their depreciated money can now buy only half, or less than half, of what it once did.

Thus, prices are high. True, you can go to the banks with American money and get dizzy amounts of francs, but the francs won't buy much. Oranges and bananas are a franc apiece, vinegar is thirty-two cents a pint, eggs cost you a franc each, and butter and milk

are in the list of luxuries. Beef comes from Cape Breton or from the one farm at Miquelon, twenty miles away, via the rheumatic little tug that makes the trip each week. You'll see few sights more picturesque than the cattle being hoisted off the tug or the steamer, in huge canvas belts, while everybody stands watching on the quay and gives lots of free advice, and the signal man shouts at the donkey-engine man his "*Vire!*" or "*A monter!*" or "*Arrière!*" Since this transport is costly, beef comes high, and St. Pierre resigns itself largely and with economy to codfish, its only plentiful native food.

Everything passes, almost, in the money line. The currency is an odd mixture of French, American, Canadian, Newfoundland, Portuguese, Spanish, and heaven knows what. When shopping, you become involved in hopeless tangles and finally have to take what change the shopkeepers give you, which may even include a few shinplasters of local printing, worth a few sous. It seems as though money of this sort might be made at home.

"*Le dollar monte encore!*" is a cry from the heart that you will often hear at St. Pierre; or else, "*Chaque courrier fait monter les dollars!*" It is because of this that in the dingy café you have to pay forty cents for *café au lait*, with a little bread and butter. It is because of this that the shoemaker cannot repair your shoes unless you bring your own piece of leather with you, and that, in many shops, the guileless merchant proceeds to load you up with coins brought in perhaps by some salt-laden schooner from Cadiz, or with Belgian small-change which you later discover has been canceled as a medium of exchange.

But, though the franc rises or falls, the fishing of cod goes on forever. In cod, St. Pierre lives and moves and has its cognac. Everything depends on cod; everybody talks cod, thinks cod, and lives cod.

St. Pierre was once the liveliest fishing port in the world. The eighties of the last century beheld its greatest prosperity. In those days seven to eight thousand fishermen came out each spring from St. Malo, Fécamp, St. Brieuc, and Dieppe, and the arrival of the *Terre Neuves*, the vessels and crews from France, was a wondrous, treasure-producing event. The French and St. Pierre *armateurs*, or outfitters, reaped golden harvests indeed. But those fat days are gone forever. Newfoundland grew jealous of St. Pierre's bursting prosperity, and in 1886 executed a flank attack on the French colony by passing the accursed Bait Act. Ever since, St. Pierre has declined in wealth and power.

Codfish and bootleg liquor seem to be the life-blood of the islands. The former is more respectable to write about, and it's more openly in evidence. By means of hand-lining, beam-trawling, and the labor of the "bankers," the Miquelons procure their cod. Therefore, it's plain to see what a disaster the passage of the Newfoundland Bait Act was to the archipelago. Under that act, no more Newfoundland herring can be sold for bait. The Bait Act has also hit our American fisheries rather severely. The Lunenburg fishers, too, have suffered. One hears many stories of illicit bait buying, of seizures of schooners, heavy fines, even of pitched battles between Newfoundland and foreign fishermen. England, France, and the United States keep patrol vessels on the Banks for medical help and to maintain the peace. The Miquelons, these days,

have to depend on capelin, squid, and periwinkles; and so the fisheries have declined. Still, it's all French. And every year, though now in diminished numbers, out from St. Malo, St. Brieuc, Paimpol, Plouëzec, and other Channel ports come the very same types of men—big-booted, whiskered, with striped jerseys and huge muscles—that Pierre Loti has immortalized in his "Iceland Fisherman."

If you want to see what great works cod is capable of producing, walk out along the Cap à l'Aigle road, to the *Frigorifique*, the new fish-freezing and cold-storage plant. Your way may take you past the Pointe aux Canons, where you will find the last armament of France in her one-time North American empire—four rusty old cannon that have never been aimed at any foe; the cannon whose sole distinction, as we have seen, is that they once blew a temerarious gunner to flinders!

The "Frigo" is certainly worth seeing—a vast concrete pile, equipped with new and wonderful machinery. The French Government had it built by American and Canadian engineers at a cost of millions of francs. Its purpose is to freeze the local catch of cod and transport the fish thus frozen to France. Some say the fishers have benefited thereby, as it has helped free them from the *livret* system of credits. But even the most optimistic do not hope that St. Pierre will ever regain her former power as a fishing port.

The largest aspects of the fisheries are concerned with the Banks, which lie south and southeast of Newfoundland—enormous expanses of water shoaling from three hundred to one hundred and fifty feet in depth. Here rewards are greatest, and here, too, risks

are most imminent; for, in the almost constant fogs, liners are only too often in collision with schooners or dories, with the result that still more names are added to the roster of the *disparus en mer*. The life of a *banquier* is said to be one of the most arduous known.

If you want to see life in the raw go aboard a French beam-trawler for a run to the Banks. Astonishingly picturesque vessels, these, with tremendous brown nets slung up into the rigging, with names that stir the imagination—names like *Stella Maris*, *Sacha d'Arca-chon*, or *Maroc*. A hard life aboard such, messieurs. But the Bretons and Normans think nothing of it. To them it's all a lark; heaving the net, dragging it along the sea-floor—thereby hauling up everything and destroying the fish-feeding ground too; at which destruction the dory fishers curse roundly, with all kinds of "saligauds!" and "sacred pigs!" Then, up with the net! A slash of the knife on the binding-rope, and down on deck, from the mast-slung net, cascades King Cod by the thousand. A veritable cloud-burst of cod; a sight you never forget!

Like Gelett Burgess's goops, "they live untidy lives," these trawling Frenchmen. They feast from unwashed pannikins, hew thick slices from dirty loaves, sop up greasy stews, as they sit on hatches. But their wine, at all events, is good. You must never drink the dregs. No; the last drops of every tin cupful must always be tossed away, preferably into the sea. Some lingering, propitiatory sacrifice to Neptune?

Since the Bait Act has cut down the supply of bait for the French, the codders of St. Pierre have had to do without herring, and substitute squid and capelin, a little white fish with a black back, somewhat larger

than a sardine, also the periwinkle, which is caught in traps on the bottom, baited with cod-heads or other refuse. But nothing can replace the precious herring, so valued in their industry and so abundant along the Newfoundland coast.

In addition to the Banks fisheries, *la petite pêche*, or shore fisheries, employ hundreds of men, who go out in small boats spelled *warys* and pronounced *voiries*. Each boat always has two men, the *propriétaire* and the *avant*. The former gets two thirds of the catch. Their work is rough. They hook the cod, bring it in, clean, pickle, and salt it. The women and children help in the work on shore. Then away go the fishermen again for more bait, and so on for the season. Some three months are required to convert the "green" cod into the salted article of commerce.

A good many of the Fécampoïs, Dieppoïs, and other Channel port fishermen spend the winter in St. Pierre. These men are called *hivernants*, and the constant intercourse with such Frenchmen keeps the language of St. Pierre identical with that of the mother-country. So, as we have seen, no dialect changes have taken place, as is the case among the French in Nova Scotia and Canada. A good many new words have come into use, it is true, but the accent and construction are the same as in France.

Back of St. Pierre rise rough-bossed hills clad in yellowish mosses, lichens, and a little evergreen scrub, and here or there a leaden pool. The hills culminate in a really impressive peak, the Pain de Sucre, and then decline to the coast, facing what is improperly called La Baie. On this coast you find the stone building

whence the chained and stapled submarine cable plunges into the sea.

Westward from the town a good road leads you to the cemetery, a strange place of too-ornate bead wreaths, glass-windowed tombs showing portraits of the departed, and flowery inscriptions. France seems artistic in everything save death. Far below, the masts of shipping prick up through the low-lying mists, and the plaintive, wavering note of the Galantry Head horn sends its warning out across the face of the unseen waters.

A well-made highway leads you through the hills to the west, into a pleasant country, whence, of clear weather, you can see the Newfoundland coast and even tiny specks of houses there. Along this road lie farms and summer places, villas with red roofs, and workmen's cottages. No trees; but a little grass is being cut, perhaps, by hand. The huge scythes and odd rakes are purely French. Clumsy wagons and dog-carts labor on; with everybody wishing you a "*Bonjour, monsieur!*" Here lies the reservoir that insures St. Pierre an excellent water supply.

I returned along the road with a gleam of bright sunlight falling over my shoulder. At a farm I observed an old man with huge trousers of meal sacking, engaged in sawing wood with a bucksaw which he held between his knees, rubbing the stick up and down on the teeth. The old man's red sash told me that he was a Basque. He invited me to inspect his pigs, hens, and cows, but they did not interest me as much as the Basque himself. His wrinkled face, bright eyes, and sweeping mustaches would have warmed a painter's heart. He was a very voluble old fellow, and for half

an hour he told me words and phrases in the mysterious and little-known Basque tongue. No foreigner, I believe, has ever learned to speak it well, and one must be born a Basque to fathom its complexities. Sailors claim the only outsider who has ever learned Basque is the Old Boy himself.

After I had chatted pleasantly with the man from the Pyrenees, I bade him good-by and returned to the heights overlooking drowsy St. Pierre. The evening sun cast long shadows from the *calvaire* down toward the gray town of the many empty houses. The tolling of the Angelus and the hoarse whistle of a trawler, the clatter of an engine on the quay, and the sound of voices from below—all told me that French life still goes on in St. Pierre.

One raw, misty day I said good-by to it all, ever and aye. For the last time, from the rusty iron decks of the *Pro Patria*, I bade farewell. Already I had come to know many a kindly, well-wishing face. "Adieu, monsieur! Return some day, *n'est-ce pas?*"

"I will return!" But in my heart I knew that it could never be.

And so they wished me *bon voyage*, and so I said good-by to that last little bit of France in the Atlantic. Strong hands pulled the gang-plank ashore, cast off the hawsers, and in a babel of French the ship swung free.

St. Pierre, cheerless, foggy, and desolate—but always French—had passed into the realms of retrospect.

VI

THE REAL TREASURE ISLAND

Glimpses at the Scene of Stevenson's Immortal Romance

OUR swinging machetes slashed lianas and grotesque aërial roots that, dangling from the forest roof, thickened the jungle. Now over fallen royal palms like pillars of dull silver, now creeping beneath thorn-bushes that tore shirts and skins, we forced our sweating, treasure-hunting way. Flies buzzed and stuck. Shafts of merciless, brazen sunlight lanced through the tropic undergrowth. And from afar thundered crashing drives of pale-blue surfs aflash on beaches of black manganese sand, where long ago swashbuckling Brethren of the Coast had often swarmed ashore. This was the Isle of Pines.

"Here she is!" all at once cried Henry. "Heinrich" is his real name, and the native Pineros call him "Enrique," which is typical of this polyglottic, sun-drenched isle. "Here's the treasure-tree, sure thing!"

I made difficult way to him, and for the first time in life beheld veritable markings made by real sea-rovers in the bad old days. A sight worth fighting through the jungle to see! We had reached it from drowsy Nueva Gerona, cloisterlike little red-tiled capital of

the island; had toiled through the solemn stillness of a broad plain dotted with rompa-ropa-trees, with pines and palms, beyond the very same Casas River where once Columbus himself cast anchor. And so at last we had won to the ash-gray cliffs and spectral hollows of the Caballos Mountains topped by luminous heights of misty green. Those mountains, honeycombed with labyrinthine caves, thrust their mighty prow of Columpo Head sheer out into the ineffable azure of the Caribbean.

Under time-racked confusions of fallen rock-masses, on this Island of Enchantment, we had found the pirates' very ancient spring where once upon a time the First Admiral himself had watered his thirsty caravels. There even now remains a wall built by the crime-sticky hands of buccaneers long since dust. Struggling through the densely verdant jungle, along a sweet-perfumed trail edged with occasional stones laid in parallel rows, we had found a *majá* snake coiled about a giant toad. After we had rescued the toad, we had made slow progress toward the immense palm near the sea, marked by a crudely cut semaphore pointing back at the spring. Midway between spring and palm we had now discovered the blazed tree that—so Henry's very ancient parchment showed—was a marker for much golden loot. And gazing at that silent sentinel of dead men's gold, eloquent witness to bloody deeds of an age long vanished, I felt the thrill that comes but once in a lifetime.

"Here's the three slanting ax-marks, same as on the chart," Henry calmly announced. Nothing could ever excite Henry, not even the two or three million in broad doubloons that the map declared lay hidden



The Basque ox-drivers add a colorful touch.



Photo by Briand.

"A dog's life" in St. Pierre means work.



What mysteries this treasure-
tree could tell!



© *American Photo Co.*

Stevenson's "Three hills running North and South."

near. "And we know the compass-course to lay. If we only knew how far to go!"

For the moment I was not thinking of distances or brass-bound chests full of moidores, golden crosses and chalices, or such. Just to behold a giant rubber-tree with gnarly buttressed roots, blazed in these tropic solitudes by genuine sea-robbers—that alone sufficed.

The tree, one of innumerable picaroons' markers on this island gem of strange beauties, stands near a stupendous marble precipice starred with jets of languid palm-plumes, overgrown with improbable trees and plants that Doré should have seen before drawing his pictures of *Inferno*. It is walled by brooding, startlingly green jungles where flash metallic-throated humming-birds, where quail pipe, where dragon-flies dart like stabs of bronze, and black parrots sound their single, sugary, piercing note. Rare orchids cling in tufts high along the forest roof. The gigantic ostrich-feathers of bamboos sweep aloft. On distorted red gumbalimba-trees and on bloated, green-barked seibons cling melonlike nests of white ants. Other ants, the marching armies of the leaf-cutting *vivijaguas*, there make clean-beaten little roads patrolled by vigilant, huge-jawed guards.

The pirate marker itself is centuries old, with long-trailing tentacles that sweep down to strike into a black mold enriched by who can tell what dead men's bones? On one side you find three ax-slashes and several bullet-holes now nearly healed over. On the other you discover a pair of raised wings, a bird in flight, a torch, an excellent carving of a tobacco-pipe. What

hands, now ages crumbled to oblivion, engraved those tokens? And where lies the robber hoard—perhaps pieces of eight, onzas, massive golden jewels of old Spain—to which point these half-obliterated symbols?

Ah, if you only knew! . . .

As you dream and muse, smoking a well-earned pipe under the treasure-tree and sweatily wondering where the deuce to dig, you are breathing the air of a spot rendered immortal by Robert Louis Stevenson. For "Treasure Island" tells how the old sea-dog at the "Admiral Benbow," when mellow with grog, used to prate of the Dry Tortugas, Trinidad, Caracas, and the Spanish Main. That obviously places Treasure Island in the Caribbean. Stevenson must have read Sir Francis Drake's narrative, in which the Isle of Pines largely figures. Then, too, how could he have escaped the story of that master-pirate, Latrobe, who buried his blood-stained loot on this very island—some say in Vivijagua Bay, which still bears the name of Treasure Beach? I have myself photographed a pirate chest unearthed there; a chest unfortunately empty!

Steven Chalmers after long study declared:

Unconsciously Stevenson brought the *Hispaniola's* rascally crew here to dig up that treasure. No doubt it was Long John Silver who conned the ship hither, while Jim Hawkins watched from the forward deck, all agog to get ashore and see the place!

Does not "Treasure Island" mention "three hills in a row, running southward"? On the shores of Siguanea Bay, Isle of Pines, the Morillos de la Siguanea do just that. Stevenson's description of Skeleton Island fits to a T the Morillo del Diablo, off Columbo

Head. It speaks of shoals and banks that lie off the coast, exactly like the keys that fringe this island here. His "sea-lions" can be nothing but the manatees of Lanier Swamp. Then too—

The hills ran up clear above the vegetation in spires of naked rocks. All were strangely shaped, . . . running up sheer from almost every side . . . wild stone spires with a great number of contorted trees . . . which grew low along the sand like brambles, the boughs curiously twisted, foliage compact, like thatch.

No more accurate description of Isle of Pines mountains and of mangroves could be written. More conclusive still, Treasure Island abounds in pine-trees.

"Many tall trees of the pine family, out-topping the others." The romance speaks of "scattered pines," "longish fir-trees," "the wood, all of fir," "tall green pines." It says: "The top of the plateau was dotted thickly with pine-trees." At the anchorage behind Skeleton Island, "sheer above us rose the Spy-glass, here dotted with single pines, there black with precipices." "The pines, great and small, grew wide apart."

All this is a regular photograph of the Isle of Pines. Pine-trees grow on no other island so far south. Just the mention of them alone beyond all argument fixes the Isle of Pines as the real Treasure Island. Were any added proof needful, it is furnished by the clincher that the highest peak in the Cañada Range here, towering up to sixteen hundred feet, has from ancient times been called the Spy-glass. That ought to hold all doubters for a while! True, Tobago sets up a claim, but compared with the Isle of Pines, Tobago hasn't a leg—or rather a pine—to stand on. So the Isle of Pines is duly elected as the scene of Stevenson's swash-

buckling thriller. That's my story and I'm going to stick to it!

No other island I have ever visited, and many these have been, has ever boasted such traditions of gentleman-adventurers and loot. Despite its thrilling, sanguinary history, however, the Isle of Pines—always swept by sea-breezes under a sky of faultless azure—to-day drowns in warmth, peace, and loveliness that make it a dreamland of quiet contentment, a beauty-spot unequaled elsewhere in the West Indies.

Drop a plumb-line directly south from Tampa, then due east from the tip of Yucatan project another line, and at their crossing you will find this strangely romantic isle of pirate lore and legend basking amid jade-green, lilac, and opalescent seas. A bit of ancient Spain transported bodily to the New World and endowed with a climate, with fruits and flowers such as Europe has never known—this in brief is the Isle of Pines. Just as married life without an occasional blow-up would be a bit monotonous, so this perpetual June makes you hope for a trifle of bad weather. You long for a sullen day, so that you may have the joy of seeing the sun glow down again through a diaphanous golden vapor, instead of being always gloriously with you.

Here you find endless queer botany, geology, and languages and peoples, as well as sheer, raw, gorgeous color. Here in full bloom you meet the fragrant tropics, with every fruit and flower rioting to full perfection. This parklike bit of plain, mountain, and jungle, about the size of Rhode Island and slashed by half a dozen rivers, furnishes amazing studies of

many kinds. Here breadfruit and yams, pineapples, mangoes, and papayas, cinnamon, pomegranates, and guavas vie with citrus fruits, queer Oriental nuts, and odd delights such as the cashew, the sour-sop, the loquat, and custard-apple. Alligator-pears and caimitos compete with granadillas, marañones and endless other fruits unknown to us of the North. You're always experiencing a new sensation from some extraordinary thing somebody's asking you to try.

"Just take a bite of this," your friends are constantly inviting you, and then you get a new gustatory shock or thrill, as may be. Out at "Jones's Jungle," Santa Fe way, you run into some choice surprises. For there Harry Jones has grown more fruits than you could sample in a month of Sundays. Some of them he has developed himself, in Burbank fashion. And he has tame fish, in palm-shaded arroyos, that come to be fed; rare birds alighting on his dinner-table to share the feast; queer edibles that grow on the tree-trunk instead of on the branches; others that look like wax and taste like ambrosia; others still that hang at the end of ropes, or have the flavor of hard-boiled eggs.

"Queer but delicious," is all you find to say, and let it go at that. One thing I never grew quite hardened to, in three winters there, was the tons of grape-fruit left ungathered on the trees; other tons thrown away at the packing-houses because of some slight defect in color. Marvelous, juicy grape-fruit, mind you, but not exactly the right shade. "Why, sure, brother! Take all you want, and welcome!"

"What a wicked waste!" you begin by exclaiming, and at first try to eat more fruit than is good for you,

just to save it. But you soon give *that* up! Still, it always hurts a little to see carloads of golden-ripe globes heaved away, despite all your realization that it can't be helped and that a too-bountiful Mother Nature is the real culprit.

Down on this Pirate Island of Enchantment, land of unfading and joyous beauty, where nothing seems quite real, banana-palms wave their fringed and tattered green banners gently over time-tinted, plastered brick walls on which with changing colors swift chameleons lurk and dart. Cocoanuts ripen and thud down in patios that blaze with purple bobadilla, blue martinique-flowers, double hibiscus, with bougainvillæa and crimson poinsettia, and lovely, unknown blooms. You presently cease to wonder at the ceiba-trees, the towering, gracefully swelling columns of royal palms bursting to feathery emerald plumes sixty feet in air. You give up even trying to count the thirty-odd kinds of palms—the bottle-palms, dwarfs, manacas, star-palmettoes and so very many more—that stand stenciled against the sky of liquid crystal blue.

Not for a good while, though, do you grow accustomed to the amazing jumble of human types here, a hodge-podge unequaled anywhere else on earth save in Hawaii—perhaps not even there. This sunny little ex-pirate isle can give you about anything you order by way of nationality or language. All colors, white, black, brown, yellow, do business together. A walk down Calle Martí, chief thoroughfare of Nueva Gerona, will any day convince you that you're in one of this world's queerest mixing-stations.

Your tailor is Syrian. His wife is Spanish. Their

two-year-old prattles in English, Spanish, and Arabic. Your grocer is a smiling Hongkong fellow, speaking four or five languages. Chinamen, by the way, do most of the storekeeping and make a masterful job of it. Japanese run many of the farms and fruit ranches and every year take up more land; they have colonies, where little yellow women work in the fields with fat babies slung on their backs. No race-suicide there! Hindus, too—regular ones, with turbans—are coming in, and are received as men and brothers.

In one Gerona block I listed a Chinese grocery, a hardware store run by a Swede and a Jew, an American garage, a Syrian dry-goods emporium, Cuban barber-shop, Greek dry-goods store, Spanish café. Other side of the street, same block: American grocery, German tinsmithery, German harness-shop, jewelry-store run by a Polish Jew; then a Canadian commission-brokerage business, Spanish restaurant, Cuban café, American commission business, and an American bank.

I have counted eleven nationalities at one time in a single Chinese grocery. The language-lover finds this island a paradise. A good deal of French is spoken, and even some Swiss-German. Four tongues were current in the single patio upon which, one winter, my house opened. About the first thing you ask a stranger is: "Speak English?" If he doesn't, you thrash round for some common medium. Perhaps you take something for granted and address a shiny black man in your best Castilian, only to have him answer with a broad Jamaican or Cayman accent:

"Excuse me, sar, but if you h'address me in English I will understand you better!"

Spanish predominates on this Treasure Island; but every old thing goes; or what have you? Some rare, hybrid jargons develop. You hear pigeon-Spanish that would drive Madrid insane. A purist would perish in five days, but let him go. Damn the torpedoes and the grammar, and full steam ahead! The main thing is to do business. At first it seems odd to hear Celestials and Japanese slinging Spanish; but then, why shouldn't they?

Queerer still it is to see a group of those two nationalities, foregathered out of the blinding sun beneath a long, red-tiled arcade, using Spanish for their truck and barter. The only other way they could possibly get together would be by painfully writing it all out in Chinese characters.

You can choose any kind of society you like down here—stick with your own nationality, or rub elbows with a dozen or twenty others. Americans own 90 per cent of the land, run most of the big business, and number perhaps a tenth of the total 5,000 population. They give you the overflowing hospitality that's found among all white men in every far place. On the broad piazzas of the planters' *fincas* you can loaf and smoke and dream as nowhere outside the tropics. Sheltered from the blue fire of immeasurable skies, you overlook wide groves where golden fruit hangs all shining in the sun. A shimmer as of trembling, fluid bronze hangs over the broad plains, palm-tufted, fading in drifts of grass-fire smoke to high billowings of mountains that loom in purple silhouettes. Old-rose, saffron, and gold glow behind those palm-tufted regions of enchantment.

Letting the lavish colors of this picturesque Treasure

Island, vivid as a macaw's breast, soak to your very marrow-bones, you feel this is a pleasant land wherein to work or rest or play.

All English speakers, incidentally—Canadians, Americans, Englishmen—are rated by the Pineros as "Americanos." Our language has left its impress on the natives in at least one word, "*Olrrait!*" as the papers print it. Then, too, every non-Americano kid knows "Fi' cen'." But woe unto you if you bestow a single coin. In Santa Fe I once indiscreetly gave one *centavo* to a young Pinero. Almost immediately I had to take refuge in a grocery, where I handed several *reales* to a Chinaman, to be changed into pennies and distributed. Under this smoke-screen I escaped to a waiting *Fotingo* and stepped on the gas.

Fotingo, by the way, is Cuban for "Ford." *Fotingos* and ratty little ponies that single-foot along the red roads are the favorite mounts. A Pinero would think himself disgraced if he ever closed the muffler of his *Fotingo* or failed to make the loudest possible honks at every corner. You'd be surprised at the ruction a bunch of ailing flivvers can kick up even in a little town of only two thousand, like Nueva Gerona. It gives you a homelike feeling to find that Ford jokes exist also in Spanish. Round the corner from my house a pathetic wreck of a flivver was sleeping its last long sleep. Shattered, tattered, defunct, it rested on naked rims, scorned by even the buzzards that ever sweep over the red-tiled roofs. On its side the hand of some anonymous jester—a would-be gold-digger—had chalked in straggling letters:

ESTE FOTINGO VALE \$1000.00 Y CORRE 90
MILLAS POR MINUTO Y CON GOMA \$1500.00

Which, being interpreted, reads: "This flivver is worth \$1,000 and runs 90 miles a minute. With tires, \$1,500."

But speaking of the young Pineros being gold-diggers—it runs legitimately in the blood down here in this colorful isle. Almost from the very beginning this has been the champion gold-hiding and gold-digging island of the Caribbean. Hardly had Columbus put it on the map, when it became a hang-out for the jolly fellowship of those sea-hawks, picaroons, and swash-buckling old pirates who used to make navigation along the Spanish Main such an exciting game of Tag, You're It! When I say Columbus, I mean just that. Isn't it a rare title to distinction to have been discovered by the great First Admiral himself?

None other than he was the first white man to sight from afar its lofty clouded mountains, the Casas and Caballos ranges, on June 22, 1494. "An island some thirty leagues in circumference," he reported it, and changed the name from the old Indian "Camaraco" to "Isle of the Evangelist." The calm and shallow seas about it, "pleasant as an inland lake," invited exploration. And as Columbus' ships needed watering, he made a landing at Columpo Head—probably a corruption of "Colombo." There he took wood, as well as water, "the purest and softest ever seen," to quote his own words. I maintain that he filled his casks at the very spring of the pirates near the blazed tree.

He certainly entered the Casas River, which felt the keels of his caravels to the spot where Nueva Gerona now drowns in the amber tropic sunshine. Marble mountains in brilliant relief, with deep blue-

shadowed valleys; emerald mangrove-tangled banks; jungles odorous with dew-sparkling flowers—all this island paradise must then have appeared to Columbus's eyes much as to ours, more than four hundred years later. Like the bold conquistador he was, and also with a canny appreciation of any gold or silver that might be lying around loose, he with drawn sword took possession of the isle for Ferdinand and Isabella.

Presently he sailed round the west coast to Siguanea Bay, and there got stranded on a sunken key, so that only after hard labor did he float again. All hands went ashore to lay in supplies of mangoes, pineapples, cocoanuts. The Great Discoverer himself drank cocoanut-milk. Then came a run-in with his crew, that almost mutinied through fear of the strange colors in the sea. All round the island we moderns behold only beauty in these opal, sapphire, and ultramarine waters bursting snow-white on barrier coral reefs, on dazzling silver beaches, and on jagged mountain headlands crowned by ivory-columned groves of royal palms. Not so the ancient mariners who sailed with Christopher. This mottled ocean frightened them. Huge, dark seaweed patches on milk-white sandy sea-floor appeared to them as fearful pits yawning to engulf their ships. And so they forced their admiral's hand, hoisted canvas, and departed, never to return.

You get a man-size kick out of the realization that, just as certainly as you here tread ground where once the olden "thieves by land and by sea" used to roam and riot, in the Isla de Pinos you can steer your motorboat over the very waters that once Columbus navigated. That here you can step ashore just where he long ago planted the gold and crimson banner of

imperial Spain. Down in this vernal Isle o' Dreams history comes alive. Shadowy galleons with high, carved, gilded sterns and purple sails heel once more to odorous trade-winds, under the fervid splendors of an immense and ardent sun; or creep in tropic night, beneath a purple bubble of sky dusted with soft-gleaming stars, along surf-roaring cathedral cliffs. Here lurk pirate feluccas, while cutthroats with hairy chests and crimson-bandanna'd polls lean scowling at battle-scarred rails; the Jolly Roger high aloft flaunts its black menace; and pistols and naked cutlasses gleam in the light of a mellow Caribbean moon.

For a time after Columbus sailed away the island lay quiet, occupied only by simple, kindly, and hospitable Siboney Indians—now completely vanished, whose principal claim to remembrance is that they served as a sure and easy meat supply for the cannibalistic Caribs of neighboring isles. Long since extinct, they have left only a few scattered bones and certain cave-paintings. The name "Los Indios," on the west coast and on some outlying keys, must be their only monument.

Whatever Indians the Caribs didn't devour were soon exterminated by the slavers, smugglers, and pirates that presently began to visit and settle. For two centuries only fugitives and wasters dwelt here, some raising cattle that the buccaneers usually stole from them and converted into the jerked beef whence all buccaneers derive their name. And there were soldiers of fortune enough and to spare, God wot, in those hard days; plenty for a score of rip-roaring sea romances! As Spanish galleons commenced to wallow heavily eastward from Mexico and Central America,

heavy-laden with jewels, silver, gold, a hornet swarm of ill-omened sea bandits began to buzz from this strategic hive.

The isle was absolutely made to order for these blithe scoundrels. Oddly enough, its very shape suggests a skull and cross-bones. Its northern part is nearly circular; its southern, cut off by the terrible Lanier Swamp, stretches out like marrow-bones, horizontally. Nature played one of her grimmest jokes in forming this pirate toll-gate right across the path of Spanish looting.

"Things simply couldn't have happened better for those old birds of prey," Lefferts will tell you—only his name isn't Lefferts. (From this point on I give no real names. The island law is that 50 per cent of any treasure-trove goes to the Government, and I have no right to give publicity to other people's prospects or actual finds.) To resume: everybody knows Lefferts. He's lived in Spanish America twenty-eight years, speaks what he calls "pure, sugar-house Spig," and has a genuine pirate cannon, to say nothing of rusty manacles from an old slave-ship that once brought hither cargoes of black ivory.

"This place," says he, "was nuts for the pirates, with all its shoals and keys, hidden rivers, swamps, mountains and caves. The buccaneers lurked here, sailed out and looted galleons, made all the Dons walk the plank, then took the treasure and the women and ducked back where no Spanish man-o'-war could ever find 'em. They camped here wholesale. Buried their stuff here, marked all kinds of rocks and trees, and sailed away. Lots of 'em never came back. They had pressing engagements at Execution Dock and elsewhere. The

whole island is littered up with indications of pirate diggings, old wrecks, mysterious carvings, and the like o' that. I know for a fact lots of treasure has been dug up here. Pretty reasonable to suppose there's still a lot left. And as for pirate charts—!"

He will show you charts, and so will many others on this honest-to-goodness Treasure Isle. The butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker all have faded parchments tucked away. Once you get well enough acquainted, folks down here will produce maps that—did the owners just have cash and time to follow up their clues and properly excavate—might yield results. I know for a fact that one of the finest houses in Gerona was built with pirate gold. Several other island folk have quit work all of a sudden and become independent. A find of more than three thousand dollars in coral-crusted Spanish silver is well authenticated. It had to be smuggled out because of the tax. One chap shipped a treasure-chest with twelve locks to a Canadian millionaire. Unfortunately, the chest had no bottom. Some enterprising fellow must have cut the bottom out. Seems as if somebody always beat you to it. Plenty of old Spanish dollars have been sold for curios here, and *centenos* or doubloons, too. Plenty and to spare! Only the other day a strike was made—church plate, gold crosses, and such. It stirs the blood!

Tom Knight has been thirty years on the island and knows it like a book. Between odd jobs at his garage he'll sit in a shady spot and spin you off yarns by the mile about treasure-lore.

"I know one old English schooner," says Tom, "that a gang of pirates overhauled stuck on a reef near Punta del Este—where the beautiful white beach and

sunken sea-gardens are. The pirates got a lot of money and brass cannon. Took the cannon to Jamaica and sold 'em for junk, and got ten gold *onzas* apiece for 'em. Twenty-seven cannon, mister. And I know a south coast fellow that was excavating to build him a house, and struck a cache just by accident. It run to nigh a hundred thousand.

"Morgan's partner, Pelayo, used to hang out here. Danged nigh starved to death at Siguatea Bay, he did, before he had luck and captured that big Mexican ship and hove ten priests over to the sharks. Made a lot o' Dons in stove-pipe armor perform on the plank. Pelayo buried his stuff at Siguatea. He was at Rio Itabo, too, near Los Indios. On a piece o' land I've got down there, I one time found four palm-trees planted in a square-like, within eight foot of each other. When I dug at the center, I found it had been dug before and everything had been took. There was nothing left but some pieces of clay jars. But I've found copper bars at Itabo, and there's lots of blazed trees there.

"By the way, speaking of Morgan, 'twas him that started out from this very island the time he overhauled that Tampico ship heavy-loaded with gold and silver church ornaments, gold altars and crosses, and so forth. He took the stuff, burned the ship, and buried his loot near the Júcaro River. My friend So-and-So found part of it, too. Treasure finds? Man! I could tell you dozens of 'em!"

He did indeed tell me dozens of 'em, and I could tell 'em all to you were space unlimited. Just two or three more:

"Then another time: Morgan captured a treasure-

ship out of Mexico, landed the crew at Cayman Brac, and put in here at the Isle o' Pines to bury the gold. He missed two bars o' yellow metal. Looked everywhere, but couldn't find 'em. Cabin-boy located 'em in a pan o' dough an' told Morgan. So Morgán shot the cook and gave him a sea-toss overboard. That happened on the south coast, and I often heard the people down there tell of it. What's more, I can show you the very spot. Wish I could show you the gold too, but that's all been dug up and took away long since.

"I know a man named Never-Mind, that come here and went into the lumber business, just for a bluff. His real business was a chart he had. He bought him a place at Vivijagua and hired men to dig for him. Found stuff, all O.K. Loaded it aboard a vessel one night and pulled out for the States. What did he get? Two kegs, mister, with moidores into 'em, that's what—forty thousand dollars. Years after, another man o' the very same name, his son, I'm thinking, come back here and pulled almost the i-identical same stunt. Went in the lumber business at Caleta Grande and worked three or four months. Had a map to go by. I remember the very Sunday he struck pay-dirt. Went to Havana with a load o' mahogany and somethin' else too, and never come back. Just how much he grabbed off I never could find out, but you bet 'twas aplenty. And there's lots left, even now. Oh, the stuff's here, all right—if a feller only had the time and capital to put in, say, a month, goin' after it right and proper."

Yet for all its thrilling, blood-stained past, this little gem of the southern seas to-day drowns in tropic warmth, peace, and loveliness that make it one of the



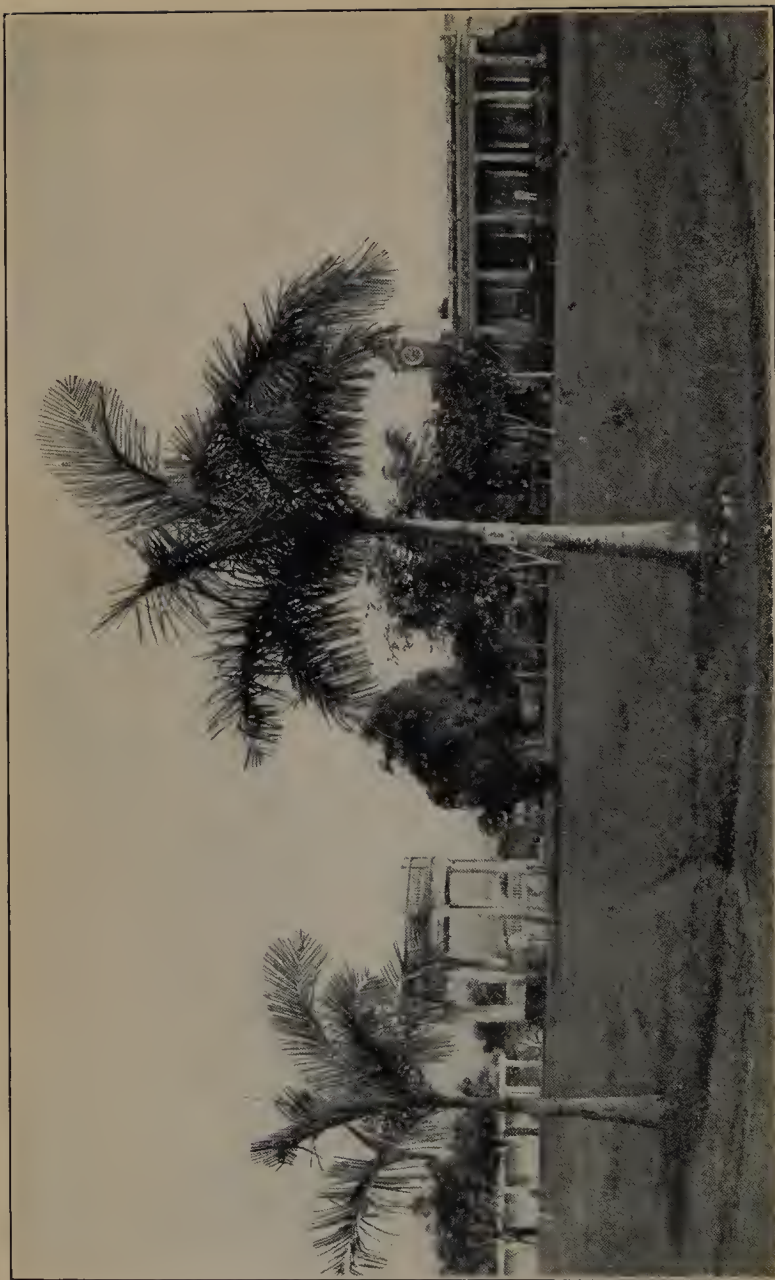
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The *volanta* dates from Spanish times.



© American Photo Co.

A glimpse of Nueva Gerona reminds one of Spain.



© American Photo Co.

The plaza is quite in the Latin-American tradition.

most delectable islands I have ever visited. Generously is it blest with soil and climate, water, fruits and flowers and enchanting landscapes of plain and seashore, river, forest, mountain-range. No epidemic has ever visited this isle, unless you count epidemics of pirates. And by the way, Uncle Sam stamped out the last of those when in 1822 Commodore David Porter with a fleet of light-draft vessels operating out of Key West pursued the ultimate buccaneers to the Isla de Pinos. Here he captured or destroyed nearly all of them—and exit piracy forever!

In this modern garden of the Hesperides, where the word "hustle" is unknown, only one person dies for every three born. The principal cause of death is old age; the death-rate is only ten per thousand! During pirate days it must have been higher, depending on how much ammunition the freebooters had. Certainly in those roistering times the few cattle-breeders, their slaves, and the "cimmaroons," or fugitive blacks from other islands, who dwelt here, were hardly good insurance risks. Scarcely had Spain founded the military posts of Santa Fe and Nueva Gerona, to check the sea-rovers, when the rovers cried: "Mate!"

Sir Francis Drake swooped down on the island, near the end of the sixteenth century, massacred everybody within reach, and sacked and burned Gerona by way of "singeing the beard of the Spanish king." Another lusty band of rascals tramped the dusty road to Santa Fe, and put that also to the sword and torch. Before the Dons could send help, the "English Dragon" had flown. Bartholomew Portugues was wrecked here, in a huge captured vessel. He had to row away and leave his loot, all safely planted. Time and again the island

has been harried by the most ferocious packs of sea-wolves that ever rioted and murdered. The heart that loves bold, bad deeds must ever thrill to the annals of adventure and of high romance here written.

Spanish men-at-arms, corsairs, and *contrabandistas*, slavers, freebooters, and brigands of the sea, here all had their fling. Latrobe, Peg-leg Jols, Lafitte, and many another knight of the Caribbees retreated to the island's hidden fastnesses in time of stress. As I slash my way through the jungle to a blazed tree, I love to imagine that my illustrious ancestor, Captain England—the most ruffianly villain, 'tis said, that ever scuttled a tall galleon—cut those very marks. "First with England, then with Flint," says *Long John Silver* of his piratical service. I boast of a pirate hanging somewhere on my family tree. Come, shades of most excellent Captain England, show me where your broad doubloons lie buried here on Treasure Isle!

High jinks and barbecues those red-fisted old bandits used to hold here, while they refitted and careened their ships. Then out they sallied for more rapine, or even for assaults on "The Havannah" and on the treasure cities of the Spanish Main. The redoubtable Morgan himself was using the island as a base to attack Havana, when the British crown converted him to respectability by making him governor of Jamaica.

As one sits here in this sun-bright Elysium, looking out on a red-bricked patio all gay with brilliant blooms; listens to Spanish voices over the vine-embroidered wall; hearkens to a parrot in the royal poinciana tree asserting that "*Cotorrita pide pan!*"—local version of the request for crackers—it seems almost impossible

to realize that this very place was once ravaged with fire and sword. Yet here swaggered and slew Bartholomew Portugues, Drake, Rock Brasilero, and many such choice spirits. This sky, blue as a humming-bird's throat, once was darkened by the smoke of burning houses. The red dust of these quaint old streets once showed far redder still. . . .

Now all is peace; and as for treasure, most of that is to-day being mined in the form of golden citrus fruits, peppers, tomatoes, and a hundred other products. Wealth too is coming from the mountains, where uncountable tons of the finest structural marble lie heaped to palm-clad heights. Early in the sweet-scented vermilion dawn, when a single morning star burns over the shadowy flanks of the Sierra Caballos, and when through moonstone-gray mists of the plain innumerable chancleers nigh and far crow mutual defiance, the whistle of the *marmolería* echoes from range to range. The *marmolería* is the marble-works. All day long, marble is blasted down and is sawed into slabs by powerful machinery. Some of the marble is a wonderful rose-pink—more color!

This island girt by lacquered sea holds iron ore too, copper, diorite, manganese, and gold. The deposits will be worked *mañana*, perhaps; not to-day. After all, when sun and sky and trade-wind all enchant you to loaf and invite your soul, and when you've got a palm-tree, a cup of *café con leche*, and a sweet-flavored, brown-paper cigarette, why bother with mere minerals?

Queer that an island so rich in fruits and food-stuffs should be so almost totally lacking in native animal life. Here's one of the puzzles that make islands such fascinating studies. What scientist can explain why

this island has only one native mammal? This is the *ajoutia*, a harmless rodent the size of a rabbit, esteemed by the natives a great delicacy. Not a single venomous snake menaces you. The only serpent in this Eden is called the *majá*. Though sometimes twenty feet long, he's an arrant coward, fleeing from man. His sole vice is a hankering for fresh fowl from your chicken yard. Some of the Pineros forgive him this and keep him as a pet to clear their houses of rats.

The seas hereabout are rich enough to make up for any poverty of land life, swarming with game-fish from Spanish mackerel to barracuda, from king to amberjack, from pompano to tarpon. Off Cape Frances the banks are reputed the finest fishing in the Caribbean. Immense sea-turtles lay eggs on the southern beaches; and there, too, dwell big, grotesquely frilled iguanas, said to be finer eating than young pullets. You can have my share of both iguana and *majá*, to say nothing of *ajoutia*, though the Pineros claim there's nothing finer than a boa-constrictor steak. But when it comes to the spiny crawfish, you're talking! All you need is a boat and a two-pronged spear, or you can wade almost anywhere along the coast and stick these *langostas*. And never was the crawfish's cousin, our northern lobster, half so delicious.

More than two hundred kinds of birds invite the nature student. I shall spare you a catalogue; but white cranes, humming-birds, trogons, and bee-eaters, water-fowl, black and yellow banana-birds, *carpinteros*, tanagers, and many more will give you something for your note-book. So will the parrots that flash their gorgeous hues among tufted gold-green palm-crests, like darts of living fire. Every year many thousand

dollars' worth of them are caught and shipped away. Lots of island houses have at least one parrot to chatter in their patios, crawl underneath the thatch, or shriek in English and Spanish at the harmless, necessary cat.

Fat black bees make ambrosial honey from cocoanut and other tropical blossoms. Bats hang clustered by the thousand in the mountain caves, whirring out at night in vast aerial armies. Add gorgeous butterflies and moths, and fireflies so large that you sometimes mistake them for automobile headlights, and you may form some slight idea of what this Treasure Island offers any one who loves the beautiful, the strange.

Life in this romantic ex-pirate island clusters at only two settlements. Santa Fe, ten miles from Nueva Gerona, is loose and scattering, with gigantic laurel-trees that shelter ancient Spanish houses. It centers near some magnificent medicinal springs. Gerona basks along the Casas River, between the two principal mountain-ranges. The rest of life—American, Pinero, Japanese, or what-not—is scattered in wide-flung plantations. Red roads, for the most part excellent, knit the whole island, except for the south coast. There, a race apart, dwell Caymanero fishermen, turtle-hunters, wood-cutters, and charcoal-burners in splendid isolation.

How can mere words paint the exotic charm, the smashing colors of this Island of Illusion? How make you see its heaped and peaked up mountains, over which on redolent breezes pale blue smoke is often drifting from grass-fires burning on the plains slashed with arroyos, enverdured with pines and palms? How

convey any impression of the extraordinary types—each inviting a painter's brush—as they loiter down the shadowy arcades or trudge the almost magenta dust of old Gerona's streets?

Those streets, oddly enough for an ancient Spanish town, are laid in even squares, back from the boat-crowded river to the sierra clothed in metallic or bluish green. Daily the burning dust is sprinkled by a cart filled at the same spring that furnishes you magnesia drinking-water—water that equals Carlsbad's, and works miracles for dyspeptics. At first you grieve to see such water flung away. But when a waterman delivers unto you an eight-gallon jar for eight centavos, you stop worrying.

Rare fruits, too, are cheap beyond belief—alligator-pears, cashews, custard-apples, and guavas, star-apples, tamarinds, and mangoes. Absurdly cheap, too, are rents. I've had a whole finca offered me for twenty-five dollars a year, and another one for nothing at all! One winter my other half and I lived in a real Spanish house, all furnished, for less a month than a single hotel room costs a week in the States. Cool floors of beautiful old tiles, iron-barred windows without glass, high plastered walls cream-tinted, whitewashed beams overhead; these and a red-bricked portico with pillars, a patio gay with scarlet flowers over which swept shadows of slow-circling buzzards; an old brick well with its curb worn by the rope into deep grooves; a shower-bath, and a gaudy parrakeet on a maroon-tiled roof—all made us forget the outside world of harsh realities.

Gerona retires from dazzling light of the two or three mid-day hours, only emerging once more to full

life when afternoon begins to freshen the tropic air. Down in this enchanted isle you are content to sink into a siesta of half-dreams, to watch the most dazzling clouds in the world drift lazily across a sky of golden-misted, infinite azure; and, lighting another cigarette, drowsily murmur: "To-morrow! . . ."

All about you here the atmosphere of Spain lies brooding. This little city is typically Latin-American, with plastered seclusive houses built in solid blocks; houses tinted by man in wondrous shades of pink, blue, saffron, but even more marvelously colored by the master-painter, Time. Pale-lemon and light-blue stuccoed barracks of smartly uniformed *rurales*, plaza with its band-stand in front of the town hall surmounted by a little clock-tower, ruins of a very aged cathedral, proclaim this was one-time Spanish territory. Your note-book yields a hundred pictures: a crimson-necked game-cock strutting down the main street, crowing for a fight; mules and tiny horses bestridden by white-clad cavaliers with machetes, flapping sombreros, coiled lariats, and rope-soled sandals; balconies and grilled windows where youths and maidens gossip; families dining outdoors, on viands passing strange, under almond-trees with brilliant green and scarlet leaves; groups at night sitting in goat-hide chairs, on front porches that also serve as pillared sidewalks, so that you have to pick your way through the group, murmuring "*Dispénseme!*"—all these are foreign as Castile itself.

Glimpses of blue-painted interiors, fancy glass doors, huge water-jars, and holy pictures; inns where swaggering fellows of every color drink rum or the hot-milk-and-coffee dear to Latin hearts; scarred mahogany

tables where Spaniards or Chinamen play games you cannot comprehend—all these make unforgettable pictures. As you catch vivid impressions, each more inspiring than the last, you think of Goya's canvases, of scenes by Sorolla or Zuloaga.

Color, color, color! It blazes at you on every hand in this miniature of Old Castile. Color, from breathless, carmine daybreak through blinding noon, then down the west to sunset over mountains golden and blood-red as the banner of conquering Spain itself. Sated with the exoticism of Gerona, you wander to New Town, maybe on the way giving a "*Buenas tardes!*" to a padre in swinging black robes and moth-eaten, low-crowned hat. What a picture, as he tramps the deep-red road, through a haze of dust aureate with sun-glow slashed by swelling columns of the royal palms! And a blue, moonlit evening in that same New Town is an experience you shall not soon forget. No, not soon!

For there thatched *bohios* or native huts nestle among banana-groves. Whitewashed walls glimmer. Dim lights half reveal humble dark-skinned folk gathered at their simple meal of malangas, rice, and fish. Goats and babies are much in evidence, equally noisy in the moon-gleam, often equally clad. You shall hear African voices, richly modulated, murmuring Spanish with a fluency no years of grammar-study ever can confer. Giant cacti stand writhen in the star-flecked night. Somewhere a guitar pulses, and you catch minor strains of an ancient Iberian folksong. A woman laughs. A man calls—"*Ven acá, chica!*"—"Little one, come here!" You pass on, strangely thrilled. Ah, no, you shall not easily forget!

Strange though all is and colorful, in the real Treasure Island the most romantic place of any is the wild, piratical, and still untamed south coast; a land of dreams, indeed. Even wilder and more lawless than the northern part of the island in old days, the south coast was a lair not only for regular, professional buccaneers—members of the Pirates' Union, in good standing, as it were—but also for every manner of poacher, renegade, criminal, and outlaw.

That south coast is a fit scene for any drama of violence and terror. The island is slashed almost across by a tremendous and terrible swamp called the Cienaga de Lanier. One third of the island's area lies south of this barrier. In the rainy season the Cienaga forms an utterly impassable morass three or four miles wide by fifteen long. Only during the dry months does a narrow causeway of coral rock, impassable for vehicles, connect the two portions. North and south are wholly unlike in geology, vegetation, and all. The Lanier swamp would be a naturalist's delight if he had courage to explore it. Few have. In its everglades and tropical tangles, its lagoons and bayous, lurk innumerable crocodiles, such as Esquemeling, the pirates' biographer, once saw there and described as "of a corpulency very horrible to the sight." These are not mere alligators, mind you, but real "crops" of the American variety. Some twelve-foot specimens have been captured. One day a New Town man showed me a seven-footer he had caught at Los Indios and had brought home in a truck. He had the croc hog-tied in his little yard fenced with palmetto trunks.

"*Lo quiere?*" he engagingly smiled. "Does the señor wish to buy this so beautiful crocodile, all alive?"

"How much?" I parried.

"Only ten pesos, señor. Ah, the grand bargain in *cocodrilos!*"

"Too much money for a little one like that!"

So he slumped to five pesos, but I denied myself the pleasure of acquiring it. "Have you a little crocodile in your home?" is a question I usually answer in the negative. I feel bashful in the presence of a full-grown saurian. But the Pineros handle them with casual familiarity. Out in the Lanier swamp they imitate the grunting of old bull crocs, or the squeal of youngsters, so as to call the animals. Sometimes a bullet in the eye settles the croc's hash—which hash is likely to be dog, or pig, or pickaninny. Again, armed only with a pointed stick and a knife, the Pinero will dive into the morass and rout Brer Croc up from the mud itself.

On the surface, as the crocodile attacks, the Pinero pins its jaws apart with the stick; then drives his knife home and floats the carcass ashore. Many beautifully tanned hides hang in the Gerona leather-shop. The local *zapatero* makes wonderful shoes of them. I should imagine that catching crocodiles, as a sport, might have much to recommend itself to cautious souls.

Among the festering lagoons and tropical forests of "The Great Whale," as the southern part of the island is called—its shape being remarkably whalelike—live the largest iguanas in the West Indies, *majás* twenty feet long, wild long-horn cattle of the old Spanish Estremadura breed, wild dogs, and pigs savage as any Mexican peccary. The Great Whale is the wildest, least explored region of the Antilles. There abound wild pigeons, peacocks, and swarming species of strange birds. More than fifteen kinds of humming-birds alone

have been reported. Hundreds of fish varieties are found. The few naturalists who have ever penetrated this terrible swamp tell wonder-tales. A reputation is awaiting some scientist who can completely write the story of this formidable morass.

Huge beetles are found there, enormous Atlas moths, rare butterflies, and gigantic hump-backed spiders, to say nothing of the voracious land-leech or *rodador*—the “roller,” so called because after it has gorged itself with your blood, it drops off and rolls away. Obviously, a pleasant creature.

Strangest of all in that great dismal swamp of stifling heat and bubbling bayous, fit scene for a Jules Verne fantasy, are the herds of manatees or sea-cows. These creatures are elsewhere nearly extinct, I believe, but they still lair and breed in the Cienaga de Lanier. The law absolutely prohibits anybody from hunting them, but—

“Finest meat you ever dug a molar into!” a friend one day assured me. “Queer-lookin’ critters. Got fins on to ’em, pointed heads, noses like a cow, whiskers, an’ tiny little eyes, ears, an’ nostrils. Live in salt water, but go up into fresh to feed. They’re mammals, O.K., same as a seal. Live in herds, an’ rear up to look at you. Mermaid stories must ha’ started that way. Some o’ the bulls weighs nigh half a ton. Like to take a run down to the Cienaga some day, shootin’ or harpoonin’ manatees?”

All things considered—giant boa-constrictors and iguanas, hump-backed spiders, land-leeches, festering morasses, and twenty-foot crocodiles—I managed to restrain my eagerness to plunge boldly into the Great Whale. My wife and I did, however, visit the south

coast on Ralph Herren's slim white yacht *Navajo*. We spent the better part of a week in that ominously desolate region.

Utterly different from the north coast and for the most part a Land of the Unknown, the south coast is edged with harsh, terrible cliffs of coral, with honey-combed gray limestone crags called *soborucos*. These resemble giant clinkers of a burned-up world. Between them stretch magnificent beaches of dazzling, palm-fringed sand, the finest turtling beaches in the Caribbean. The one called Playa Larga extends fourteen miles in unbroken purity. It looks to me like the most marvelous bathing-beach on earth—but unfortunately there's nobody to bathe there. What a wonderland for a winter resort! Tremendous sea-cavalry of surf continually charges the craggy sections of the coast and the offshore barrier reefs. How those surfs leap aloft in snowy spume on rocks where many a tall ship has left its shattered bones! How they bellow like minotaurs in wave-worn caverns where surely sea-bandits of the long ago must have buried their brass-bound chests!

Only at long intervals do tiny *caletas* or coves raggedly break the iron-bound, formidable barricade of dog-toothed rocks and cliffs, for all the world like giant sponges hardened to billions of needle-points. Close to land the sea-bottom sheers down to more than a mile depth. A terrific undertow impedes salvage operations on the many wrecks of galleons that have already been located all along the reef. But there Adventure beckons! . . .

Most of the Great Whale is one gigantic jungle of rare and costly hardwoods like those of Mexico and

Central America, growing in a scanty but rich soil on the coral rock. There, under the dazing heat of yellow-glowing sun-glare that sears an eternally brooding silence as of some tragic mystery, I have tramped miles of rough, white-dusty trails. These trails wander crookedly through forests tormented into monstrous and grotesque shapes of weirdness. What a setting for some stupendous tropic tragedy! Immense mahogany and cedar trees mingle with logwood, with precious majagua, *lignum vitæ*, and rosewood, júcaro, sabicú, and satinwood, and so many others that just to name them would be a weariness. More than sixty rare and precious hardwoods grow in that fantastic wilderness; and there the finest walnut, mahogany, and ebony are burned for fuel.

Only one tiny settlement clings to the flanks of the Great Whale—a little huddle of weather-faded huts called Cocodrilos. In the interior lurk a few camps of lumbermen and charcoal-burners—though only a few. Much difficulty is experienced inducing men to work or stay at all in those formidable jungles. At Cocodrilos half a hundred Caymaneros and Spanish-speaking folk wring a scant livelihood from fish and turtle, and from handling lumber hauled out along the rocky trails. The heat is brain-addling. It lies in every clearing like pools of white flame. Can one believe what one beholds there? Yes, if the camera substantiates it. I have seen, lying in the jungle, giant mahogany logs so huge that they would "square out" four or five feet. More, I have seen piles of solid mahogany railroad-ties waiting at tiny coves to be loaded aboard occasional venturesome schooners. The bridge over the Casas River at Nueva Gerona, by the way, is partly

built of mahogany. Fire has terribly ravaged the Great Whale. Its flame-wasted forests are tragic examples of economic loss. One conflagration burned four months there, converting millions of dollars' worth of the rarest hardwoods into smoke. Yet incalculable other millions remain. Go and get them—if you can!

A strange people, those Great Whale folk. And what extraordinary walls they build! At first glance their little gardens and banana plantations seem inclosed by stone walls like those of New England. But look again, and you shall see that every stone is a magnificent coral. Ragged blocks, rounded lumps, each one is cross-hatched with delicate and lovely patterns. Many a museum would welcome the humblest of such specimens, there roughly piled to keep the pigs and cows from wandering. Strange, indeed! And strange, too, were some of the pirate tales I heard there.

Everything on the real Treasure Island always comes back to pirates and charts and mysterious markings. Incidentally, I've got a chart myself, showing exactly where "there lies seventy thous. dollars in pieces of eight, in a barrell." Some time perhaps I may find some one who will help me go and dig it up. And one day I located a place where a map shows two or three million in gold. Unfortunately, my sounding-rod wasn't long enough to penetrate the earth down to the bricked-up vault that holds the loot. Maybe some time I'll have time and capital to go back there with proper digging-tools. Even a half-share in that treasure (you can have half for doing all the digging) would come in pretty handy for me!

The Isle of Pines has been more prospected, ex-

plored, and dug over for buried treasure than any other place in the world. Out in the caves you find many excavations and turned-over stones. The forest shows you red gashes in the soil where treasure-hunters have delved. Lots of stuff still lies waiting here. The whole place is opulent of Romance—with a big, big R!

In many tales, success is close at hand till the grub gives out, or the gasoline, or something. Most of the treasure-hunting expeditions have been absurdly under-equipped. What a thrilling gamble it would be to finance one of these hunts! If an adventurous spirit had a few hundred dollars and a little time, what a gorgeous, gosh-awful, roistering kick he could get out of an Isla de Pinos trek after the moidores and double-ducats!

Let Lefferts talk again.

"I know a man that positively did take a lot of treasure to the States in his personal baggage," he informs you as he lights another cigarette and leans far back in his rocking-chair. From the broad porch where hangs the water-cooler, our view ranges to the blue-hazed Casas Mountains over miles of palm and pine-clad plains—plains like a cloth of gold under a tenuous aureate mist. The tiny, silvery bell-notes of mourning-doves sound from hidden groves. Mirages as of shadowy Spanish galleons swim and drift across the ardent sky, fading into mysterious and dim distances.

"And I know," drawls Lefferts, "I know all about the Grunstrom case, too. Grunstrom had a map, an authentic one. Starting-point was a big palm at Punta Coronada. He couldn't find the other two points, so

he took a surveyor along. They had a compass in a box, and after they'd laid their course, Grunstrom (that isn't his name) put the map in the box too. Next day the map was gone. Spite o' that, Grunstrom remembered his direction. He found the place, dynamited it, and got the stuff. It was a heck of a lot, too. Man, a devil of a rake-off!"

Lefferts pauses to scratch the head of Long John Silver, his tame parrot, on the arm of his chair, then muses along:

"It's history that Latrobe and Lafitte both made this island their hang-out. Lafitte specialized in capturing the ladies and shipping 'em from here to Gasparilla up in Baratania Bay. About eighteen hundred and nine, Latrobe sunk two Spanish ships after he'd taken off six million worth o' stuff, mostly gold ingots from Panama. He buried it on the south coast. Putting to sea again, he was caught by a Spanish man-o'-war and an American corvette, taken to Jamaica, and strung up. Night before he was turned off he slipped a paper to his cabin boy and told him to take it to Lafitte.

"Whatever became of that paper I wish I knew! Lafitte never got it, that's certain. Many an expedition has tried for the six million. All that's known is that it's buried 'ninety feet from the head of a boiling spring.' Lots of boiling springs on the Isle of Pines. You pays your money and you takes your choice!"

Lefferts has an old pirate cannon to show you, a rusty little gun with a fancy carriage, taken from a south coast wreck. He has rusty manacles too, possibly once used on captives of buccaneers.

And then there's the Spanish fisherman. Bearded,



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Native "bohios" or huts, New Town.

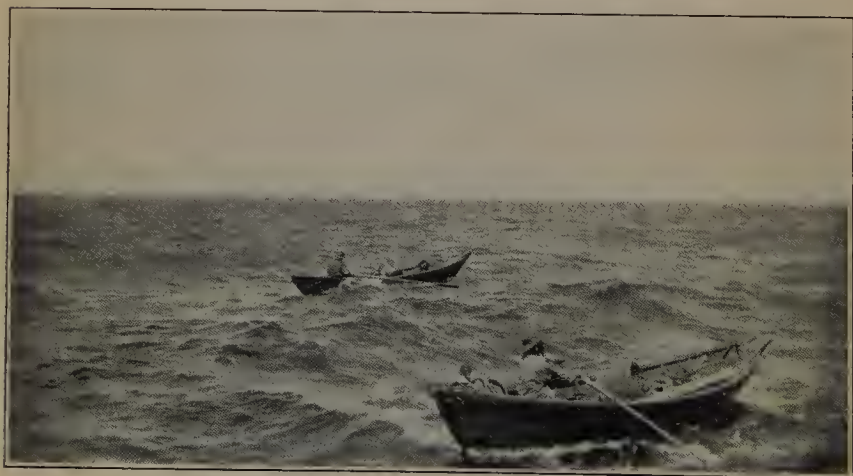


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The *majá* is, fortunately, only a chicken-thief.



Etang du Nord is of the fish, fishy.



The fishing-dories pull away to harsh labor.

barefoot, and in dingy white canvas bags of clothes, he drops in now or again to sit on a goatskin chair in your patio. At night, under the listening stars, he spins yarns of buccaneers and treasure-trove, while from his lips dangles a slow cigarette.

"Many a wreck, señor, I know on the south coast. My eyes themselves they have seen a chest lying there, on the bottom, in two and a half *varas* of water. And—"

But no more. I could keep this up for hours, just telling what I've heard here in this Isle o' Dreams.

The real Treasure Island! Or shall we call it the Island of Rainbow's End? How near the pot of gold is lying here! Dream gold? Not all! Some day perhaps I may have time and money to find a pot or two.

On Treasure Isle, what may not happen? *Quién sabe?* Who knows?

VII

THE MISTY MAGDALENS

Glimpses at a Little-known Island Group, Lost in the Middle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence

"Two dollars a day, sir, or seven a week. Them's my rates!" Thus quoth hospitable Mrs. Burke of Grindstone Island in the misty Magdalens. Swift calculation made me pay a week in advance, wondering that such prices could still exist in this sad world of H. C. L. A spotless house and bountiful fare—what more could one ask for seven per?

It gives the measure of the Magdalens. Nearly all things still remain as long of yore in that sickle-shaped "Graveyard of the Gulf," dreaded by all mariners. And justly dreaded, for its fogs, gales, currents, and huge cliffs have wrought destruction indescribable. There reefs, ever swathed in foam, scarps against which battering-ram surges eternally thunder, have crushed the flanks of numberless ships. Terror and tragedy have reigned for centuries in those far islands where Nature at her best can show no better aspect than a fitful smile.

You reach the Magdalens via a thrifty little Scotch steamer, the *Lovat*, from Pictou, Nova Scotia. One

afternoon you sail. Very early next morning you're wakened by a blare of the ship's whistle; and out on deck you see the far gleam of the beacon on Entry Island, whereof the nobly mountainous bulk looms high in pallid moonlight. Ahead, Amherst stretches its dozen treeless miles—Amherst, most southern of the sixteen islands and islets flung like a sixty-mile necklace with long dunes and sand-bars for a string joining most of them. Beyond the gray waters you see outlines of small, vague houses and a church dominated by three conical hills called "Les Demoiselles." Then, as the steamer eases up to a long wharf, you realize you're shivering, even though it's August and you've got your heavies on.

"Looks calm enough now, sir," the purser remarks. "But it blows, oh, Lord, how it blows here sometimes! Last November we got caught in a storm and ran across to House Harbor to make a lee. Stayed there twenty-four hours sweatin' the gale out, with engines full ahead yet all the time draggin' our anchors. That hurricane washed barrels o' lobsters ashore, and scallops too. It dashed no end o' ducks on the cliffs. Killed 'em, sir. Nigh killed *us*, too. Little more, and we'd been busted, sure!"

As you ponder all this, a jumble of French and English rises from half-seen folk on the wharf of Havre Aubert. Only three-thirty in the morning, yet a crowd has turned out to meet the ship—stirring event! Aromas of salt and cod trouble the sea-breeze. Swift motor-boats arrive with machine-gun exhausts to bring men eager for the lumber, mackerel-barrels, flour, mowing-machines, and so on, already being unloaded with a mighty clatter of winches. Quaint little wooden

carts, two-wheeled in the French style and innocent of springs, receive the freight.

Stars wink above immense cliffs with gypsum and sandstone brows afrown. Seabirds mournfully cry, then swoop and splash. A wreck looms beyond the pier. Dust of pink and gold glows behind Entry as dawn reveals the many-colored houses all shingled-up and shutterless. Blood-red shafts of sunrise dart across what seems a mighty lagoon almost landlocked by mountainous islands. Wiser men than I declare these islands are the peaks of a sunken volcanic mountain chain. How strange a world, "Les Iles de la Madeleine!"

Girt with velvet meadows and marvelously tinted cliffs gnawed by the sea, these foggy islands of the cod, the herring, and the mackerel lie in a vast curve right across the track of ships plying between the St. Lawrence and Europe. Their giant headlands of brick-red, of gray and umber and rich ocher are scarcely more feared than the interminable dunes and shoals to which they sink. Ah, many a tall ship has been smashed to matchwood on those iron-bound crags that leap four hundred feet aloft! Many another has been engulfed by bars and quicksands where surfs forever chant dirges for the dead or wash the shattered bones of wrecks. The death-toll mounts to thousands. Were all their ghosts to haunt the isles (as some natives say they do), what confusions of race and tongues would reign!

Entry, Deadman, Brion, and Bird Rocks are the only really detached islands. Amherst, Grindstone, Alright, Wolf, Coffin, and Grosse Ile are banded together by these treacherous sandy links across which

run roads and telegraph lines, and among which lie the strange waters of Havre-aux-Basques, Great Lagoon, and Havre-aux-Maisons. Along the quick-sands, surf forever chants dirges for the dead, or washes shattered bones of wrecks. How luxuriantly, here and there, the grass still grows above the graves of perished seafarers!

"One o' the worst wracks we ever had was the *Miracle*, out of Ireland," William Burke will tell you after you get settled—at two dollars a day or seven a week. Burke is climbing toward eighty years, but his mind is bell-clear and he remembers everything. All you have to do is sit and smoke with him by the kitchen stove and let him talk, while the boom of mighty surf warns you the implacable sea is ever gnawing away the jagged cliffs of Grindstone. Those cliffs are retreating a foot a year. Marvelous caves, dark red and lined with emerald moss in spots, are undercut. Then a tempest brings down tons of sandstone, crashing. At the cliff edge the woods shrink to a mere tangled mat of conifers. Every summer the islanders with spades cut off the overhang—

"So the sheep an' cattle won't graze too near the edge an' fall clean off the island, sir. But one cow did fall off Cap Meule. Come down holus-bolus, two hundred foot, an' never hurt her a danged mite. Landed in a snow-bank, right side up with care!" But to return to the wreck of the *Miracle*:

"She got an awful slap, that un. Full-rigged ship she were, comin' out in forty-seven with three hundred and fifty emigrants bound for Quebec. Struck on East P'int, in a heavy sou'-east gale and a blindin' snow-storm, the fourth o' May. Snow in May, sir? Sure, I

seen three foot of it, May eleventh. I seen it snow here in June, too. Winter's winter in the Magdaleens!

"Well, sir, most o' the passengers had ship-fever, anyhow, an' was in a bad way. The ship, she listed off. Passengers rushed on deck. Cap'n Elliott, he cut the masts out o' her when she struck, an' they fell on deck an' mowed right through the people. Sailors got most of 'em in boats, though. But crossin' the bar they was mostly all capsized into a gutter o' deep water an' drowned. Some as was saved then, died o' the fever. Houses an' barns was full of 'em. They kept dyin' on us till June. Nigh two hundred and fifty of 'em was buried all into one grave, with a big wooden cross over 'em, an' the grass is full two foot longer there 'n any other place round it. They're still drivin' the grass up good, them old emigrants. That *was* a time, sir! Bottom o' the old ship's still there in the sand, an' bones was found alongshore years an' years."

"Same as the walrus bones is, at Seacow Path," puts in another crony, from Old Harry Point. "Sure we used to have walrus here, thousands of 'em!" And so, you later find, history reports it. No less a sailorman than Jacques Cartier, who in 1534, with two little fifty-ton vessels and sixty men from St. Malo, discovered the islands, reported at Brion "many great beasts like large oxen, with two teeth in their mouths like elephants, but living in the sea itself." The first settlers—Normans and Acadians—came about twenty years later to hunt seal and walrus, as well as to fish. Lots of walrus still remained when, under George III, the islands passed to English rule and were given to Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin for services in the Revolution; though probably they had been much reduced from

the great herds out of which Hakluyt reports the killing of fifteen hundred in a single hunt. As late as 1765 nearly a thousand barrels of walrus-oil were taken in a single winter.

Now every last walrus has been exterminated or driven into the arctic refuge of the Far North. Gone, too, are the feudal overlords who ruled their 55,000-acre ocean domain. Many a time the islanders rebelled, till finally in the early years of this present century the Canadian Government bought out the last heirs for \$100,000. The Government helped the inhabitants purchase land, and gave them liberty from serfdom. But the walrus have never returned.

"They're gone like the American fishin' fleet that used to come here, as many as a couple o' hundred sail, but never comes no more," the crony informs you. "There's still thousands of walrus skulls an' skilitons, though, on Coffin Island. You can shovel 'em out o' the sand anywhere, an' sometimes ivory tusks." Burke shows you a mighty tusk for proof. "Bullets, too, tons of 'em. I picked thirteen bullets myself out o' one skull. They was drove right into the bone, solid. That old bull must ha' been a hard cuss to kill, eh? Lots o' bones an' tusks at West P'int, too, nigh Deadman's."

Pleasant name, that—Deadman's Island, or, as the French settlers call it, Le Corps Mort. Cartier noted it, and so did Champlain, who in 1632 gave the archipelago its present name. It's one of the harshest rocks in the world; a thousand feet long and perhaps two hundred high, it lies ungraced by any slightest spear of grass, nine miles at sea from Amherst. Gaunt, tempest-gnawed, and cruel, from a distance it looks exactly like a giant corpse laid out for burial. The

islanders view it with superstitious dread. Black indeed is its record of shipwreck and death! Tom Moore, the Irish poet, sailed past it late one evening in 1804, and did he not feel moved to write a poem on it? One cheerful verse reads:

To Deadman's Isle, in the eye of the blast,
To Deadman's Isle, she speeds her fast;
By skeleton shapes her sails are furl'd,
And the hand that steers is not of this world!

And now that we're getting poetical, Edmund Clarence Stedman also paid the Magdalens a pretty tribute:

Woe, woe to those whom the islands pen!
In vain they shun the double capes:
Cruel are the reefs of Magdalen;
The Wolf's white fang what prey escapes?
The Grin'stone grinds the bones of some,
And Coffin Isle is craped with foam;—
On Deadman's shore are fearful shapes!

With such a reputation to sustain, no wonder the chill and misty Magdalens abound in wicked sprites and warlocks. Some of these may be souls of pirates that in early days preyed on commerce till the French mercilessly exterminated such "sea-skimmers" and left their bones to mingle with those of seal and walrus on desolate beaches. It's certain that the Old Boy himself plays strange pranks up there. You hear how—

"One time a black man's carcass was found on the beach an' buried in the sand. Wind blew him right out. We buried him again, an' the wind dug him up that time too. Then somebody said if we buried him upside

down, the Old Un couldn't fetch him up, an' we done that, sir. Buried him face down, an' he stayed put!"

Satan is always messing into people's business on the Magdalens. Islanders will tell you that Jerseymen, up there, go home to Jersey by his help on Saturday night, and get back in time to start fishing on Monday morning. This, especially if they're at work down Labrador-way. Fishermen who can be drawn into talking with the devil can make strange bargains. Some who have worked with him all summer boast of it. And I heard of one who confessed:

"When it come time to divide up shares in the fall, you can bet I was extry careful to give him his full due, an' I was mighty polite in biddin' him good-by!"

But even more dreaded than Satan is the peril of fog and gale and reef, for three centuries the terror of shipping in those parts. In the Church of England cemetery on Grindstone—or Ile-aux-Meules—I saw a monument to a Captain Jorgen Lorentzen of the steamer *Athena*, and to all his eighteen men. The bodies of some were never found; but all that came ashore, one terrible blizzard in April, '84, lie asleep under those northern daisies. Ravening surfs along those many-colored crags have for nigh fifty years chanted their eternal requiem, far from their native Norway.

"I mind a ship as went ashore on Entry, half a century gone," an old salt will tell you. "All her canvas was blowed clean off. Water-logged she was, too. A Christmas Day, aye! Every man jack was froze, but we got 'em under hatches at our houses, put ice in tubs, thawed 'em out, an' then packed 'em in wool an' cod-ile. We saved 'em all. Not one perished, sir, but

there was a Mister Walters as couldn't walk till March. They stayed all winter. Each fambly took some. Walters, he taught the first school we ever had. Ah, them was the days to remember!"

Memorable, too, is the cyclone of '73 when more than thirty American schooners were caught by a sudden shift of the wind that turned the island into a deadly lee shore. The whole fleet, dragging all anchors and driven by immense ocean waves, piled ashore in less than an hour. Every vessel was a total loss.

This is the special peril of the Magdalens, that no harbor is to be found in a sou'east blow. When the wind hauls to that quarter, you have to cut and run for the other side of the islands, and if you don't make it in time—well, it's just another funeral. Your trapped vessel joins her bones to those of innumerable others bleaching along the immense bars.

You can't go to the tempestuous Magadalens without learning the story of Auguste Le Bourdais. I first heard rumors of that story nearly ten years ago, in Newfoundland, but never got the details till I reached the Magdalens. It's an epic that has spread all over those northern seas, and well deserves recording.

How a human being can survive what Le Bourdais did seems incredible. Yet he lived half a century of useful existence after his martyrdom, and remained a Hercules to the end. His son, Jean-Joseph, told me all about it in the office at Grindstone where he manages the island telegraph and also runs the local newspaper.

"That was 'way back fifty-seven years. My father was mate of the fifteen hundred-ton square rigger

Calcutta, from Quebec to Belgium with a cargo of wheat. The ship drove ashore on Coffin Island in a December blizzard and smashed up. She was one of three to get wrecked here that month. A terrible blizzard that was. For a whole week nobody could stick a nose out of the house. Terrible, *oui, monsieur!*

"When the storm blew over, some men went down to the beach to see if anything of value had come ashore. And all at once, near a hay-house, a strange thing about eight feet high reared up out of the snow at them. They thought it was a polar bear or a ghost. In terror they all ran to the priest, and he came back with them. They found a man all swollen out of shape, and crusted, frozen, with two feet of snow solid on him. The hair was frozen hard as wood to his head, and his legs were so swollen that the flesh protruded over the socks.

"He was like one crazed. He knew nothing, he remembered nothing except that he had clung a whole day and night to a piece of wreckage, and had later eaten snow. Six days he ate nothing but snow as he lay out in that screaming blizzard. And often I have heard him say he wished he had died then like all his men. Why not, *monsieur*, with both legs cut off?

"Yes, they amputated his legs. As surgery it was—what you call it?—rough and ready. No doctor, nothing. We have three doctors to-day, on Grindstone, but over on Entry Island, where they have none, the people say they die no faster than we do here. However, even without a doctor or chloroform, they operated. They had to, or my father would have died. It took eight men to hold him on a table, while another man chopped off his legs with an axe. Blood squirted

all over the ceiling. Even then my father was so strong they had a real battle to hold him. Later he went to Quebec for a proper operation that shortened him still more. But that was not till the ice went out, at the end of May. A terrible year, *mon Dieu!*

"My father returned and founded the government telegraph lines. A proper big man he was too, even cut down. In his natural state he had weighed three hundred. Afterward, never above two hundred and eighty-five. Had to walk on peg-legs and crutches. But he had a fifty-four-inch chest, and nobody could stand against him in a fight, even crippled. Ah, *monsieur*, there was a man for you!"

So think all the islanders. Auguste Le Bourdais is the nearest approach they have to a national hero. His story is by way of becoming a saga.

French and English both admire Le Bourdais. He forms a bond between them, which is well; for in general the English and Jersey men hold rather aloof from the French—who came from Normandy, Acadia, Canada, and the Miquelons. Language, church, school all keep them apart. They like to tell stories "on" each other, as happens in all bi-racial communities. There's the yarn, for instance, of the Frenchmen who wondered greatly when the first telegraph wires were strung. A group of them sent one of their number up a pole to see whether it was really true that speech could pass over a wire. The Frenchman duly climbed the pole and applied his ear.

"Hear anything?" his friends below anxiously inquired.

"*Si j'entends!*" he shouted down. "I do that, believe me. There's news enough passing, but it's all this

sacré English that I can't understand any more than my cow can!"

For all that, nearly all the French islanders speak more or less English. But only a few of the English reciprocate by speaking French. This, notwithstanding that out of the eight or nine thousand population, the English number hardly a fifth, some say only a tenth. Odd, is it not, that wherever English comes in contact with any other language, it nearly always wins the other to itself?

The line is sharply drawn up there between English folk and French. Each race lives by itself. Nearly all the places have two names. There's Entry Island, or Entrée. Grand Entry and Grande Entrée. House Harbor and Havre-aux-Maisons. Grindstone and Cap-aux-Meules. Harbor le Bear and Havre Aubert. But Grosse Ile and Etang du Nord have never taken any English names. Yet Grosse Ile is inhabited only by English! So is Entry. Grand Entry is practically all French, like Amherst and Etang du Nord. Grindstone, though mixed, has but thirteen English families.

All the French are Roman Catholics; all the English, Church of England. No other denominations exist. The schools are separate, French teachers getting \$25 a month, while English receive \$55. Save in the churches and schools, no libraries are to be found. When I say "French," you must understand that "the French of Parys is to them unknowe."

On the chance that some readers may like to know something of what the old Breton French is, as corrupted by centuries of absence and non-contact, I venture to give a few samples. It's not regular Canadian-

French. No; it's Acadian, for most of these people derive from Nova Scotia, whence their ancestors were driven at the time of the Evangeline expulsion. They still think of Acadia, and sometimes revisit it, as their fatherland. France is to-day only a misty and unreal abstraction.

You find, nevertheless, that your standard French is readily understood and admired. But what the answers mean, who at first can tell? When the natives "swing a tongue an' begin talkin'," their sixteenth-century dialect would puzzle even a genuine Frenchman.

Sharply you must listen to catch a chance word. But soon you begin to grasp the meaning. And how quaint are some of their expressions! To launch a boat is *nager un bateau*. *Tirer une vache* is to milk a cow. A nightmare is *un pesant*. *Le temps fat-i-beau* means that it's good weather. *Plancher* is ceiling and *place* is floor. Hinges are *penteurs*. *Bertelles*, *camiselles*, and *laçalbuttes* are suspenders, sweaters, and shoe-laces.

If the moon is in a cloud you must say, "*La lune est dans une noirceur*." "*Le loup-marin part après vous*" indicates that the seal runs after you. Your knee-cap is *vot' boulet de genou*. "*Comment's qu'il parle ça?*" means "How does he say that?" Chewing and smoking tobacco are *Tabaw-chique* and *tabaw-fumer*. The wharf is *le chai* or *le cha*. If you've been nowhere, you say, "*J'ai paw été à nun port*." A meal is *un rebain*. *Un sciau* is a pail. "*Cobain's que c'est loinn d'icit?*" means "How far is it from here?" The answer may be "*Mimille*," or half a mile. To say that the sun has just set you remark, "*Le soleil arrive de s'coucher*." And "in the gloaming" is *à la brunette*, than which no pret-

tier phrase is possible, even though it's not in the dictionary.

"You say that *le phare* is real French for the lighthouse?" they ask you. "Ah, no, we have never heard that word. *La lumière*—that is a lighthouse here. *Je vaw* is 'I go.' You say *j'allais* means that I went? No, no, that must be some patois. The right way is *j'ai été!*" And so forth and so on. Only the priests and a few of the richer folk talk French at all like the standard. A great study awaits some philologist here.

The races in the Magdalens remain almost as individual as the islands themselves. Despite the fact that all the islands live by the same means—cod, mackerel, and herring fishery, lobster-packing, seal-hunting, farming—they all are different.

Entry is mountainous, with its one hundred and sixty English settlers comfortable on rich farms. Wholly cut off from the other islands for three months each winter, only after the "ice-bridge" forms in February can it resume contact with Amherst, which is almost wholly French. Grindstone is the business center, with the main post-office (some four feet by six), the tiny shingled bank, and the even tinier shingled custom-house, also the wireless station. None of these islands, nor Alright, has anything in the least like a village. The buildings all stand on wide-scattered farms, or are dotted along winding roads by shore and hillside, among scattered patches of scrub forest. An overwhelming majority of families are French, on Grindstone—as in fact throughout the archipelago as a whole. Out of perhaps 8,500 population, probably no more than 1,500 are English.

The biggest fish-curing plants and herring-smokers are on Grindstone. At Cap Rouge, also on this island, you can pick up unlimited beautiful agates, jaspers, bloodstones, and pieces of chalcedony, that lapidaries can fashion into lovely things. Here such stones rank only as common pebbles. Fine cattle; fields surpassing rich by reason of plowed-in seaweed, herring, and lobster refuse; the clack of mowing-machines, and the sight of girls and women milking cows outdoors in the old French way, make Grindstone a rustic scene rather surprising in those far northern seas, only eighty miles from Anticosti. And on this island, too, stands the only apple-tree in the Magadalens. True, it's nothing but a gnarled, half-dead little crab-tree—but an apple, for all that, and a grand curiosity!

From the wireless hill I got my best view of the archipelago as a whole; and on that hill it was that Gargan immortalized himself. Gargan was a paint-salesman, from Halifax, with lots of pep and a most lively imagination. He must have had, to think he could do business in a land of unpainted, unplastered wooden houses! As we stood viewing an unspeakably glorious sunset, with long surfs rolling against gorgeous cliffs in melting windrows of color ineffable—

"It's past description!" I murmured. "Beyond all words!"

"Not at all," quoth Gargan. And hauling out his paint-card—lots of little shiny dabs stuck to a paste-board—he promptly began identifying every hue. "Now, this bay is gentian, and that cloud is mauve. That wave, there, is ultramarine, jade, and magenta. And this here light is cerise, and—and—"

He named them all, or nearly. Even after I had

started walking away down the hill, there stood Gargan on the wind-swept summit with his coat-tails flying, busily matching up those celestial sunset and ocean hues with his dinky little paint-card. For such a feat as that Gargan deserves immortality.

You find color at Grand Entry Island, when you get there, such as cannot be matched on any card whatever. I mean local color different from any other on earth. For this French-speaking island boasts the only real village in the group, the only veritable street. True, that street is hardly more than a hundred yards long, and it's paved with ankle-deep sand; but it's a real street with houses on both sides while it lasts. The whole island seems nothing but a sand-bar. How cows live there, and horses and pigs—some of these latter penned in halves of boats—seems a mystery.

Quite a metropolis, on a microscopic scale, is Grande Entrée. When the steamer arrives, huge motor-boats come puttering with crowds of islanders from all round the Great Lagoon. Then, having taken their freight aboard, they depart again to far places of mystery that I shall never know, along the shores of English-speaking Grosse Ile.

More than twenty miles of dunes and bars—where strange mirages make giants of men and horses on pale horizons—stretch away from Grand Entry to Alright, with its cliffs of slate-gray, maroon, buff, and pearl, of dark red and light purple. Veritable waterfalls of color, those cliffs are; with the long yellow beach below, the steep green-velvet hills above, patched with dark woods; and all about, the pale northern seas. A color-symphony; another job, indeed, for the industrious Gargan.

Islands, bars, lagoons, with seabirds feeding on patches of weed and with harbor seals disporting—how strange, unreal a world is this! How difficult to paint with words! You need a broad brush, deep-dipped in half-unworldly pigments, for the Magdalens.

Go to Etang du Nord, and if you there can devise some means of painting odd aromas, fame awaits you. For on the immensely long, curved beach stand scores of rough fish-houses. And as the coddling-fleet comes in, as the boats discharge their loads, and the Frenchmen clean their fish on trestles by the surf, you need a bit of stamina to keep from retreating before the massed attacks of rich perfumes and of unimaginable hordes of flies. Bright sun, dismembered fish, red sand, laughter of playing children not yet enslaved to King Cod—with these this quaint and isolated settlement, so like a fishing village in Brittany, has its own color of life not soon to be forgotten.

Even in the matter of journalism the islands stand divided. Their local paper has to be issued in both French and English. This little sheet, "The Bulletin" or "Le Bulletin," as you wish, strikes me as one of the most curious in the world. For months each winter and spring the Magdalens are cut off from the world by pack-ice. In the winter of 1927 air mail service was first undertaken. A plane made seven trips from Moncton, New Brunswick, to Grindstone, where it landed on the ice. Even one passenger was carried! The flying time was two and a half hours. But till the air mail started, no winter mails ever arrived at the Magdalens. All news had to come in by cable or, more recently, by wireless.

It takes a lot of courage and persistence, in a place

like that, to publish a newspaper. But for a good many years, Jean Le Bourdais has been getting out his "Bulletin." As a specimen of world's-end journalism, this strictly hand-made newspaper deserves notice.

Le Bourdais has a real nose for news and issues a very readable sheet. One of the oddest events he ever had to record was when a polar bear not long ago came ashore on the islands.

"He must have drifted down from the Straits of Belle Isle," Le Bourdais surmises. "And he was boss of these islands, all right! Walked right in the roads and apologized to nobody. Give him credit, though, he didn't bother any of us. We fed him on fish and refuse, and he got quite tame. Nobody tried to shoot or molest him. All our animals that died that winter—cats, foxes, horses—we put out on the ice, and he was our Health Department. Toward spring he drifted away on an ice-field. We were sorry to see him go. Pretty good bear while he lasted!"

Le Bourdais is editor, reporter, compositor, printer, proof-reader, advertising department, distributor, and everything. His plant consists of a typewriter and a mimeograph on which he prints both his English and French editions, with a total circulation (sometimes) of 600 copies. In view of the fact that Madame Le Bourdais stitches up the papers on her sewing-machine, and that *monsieur* delivers them himself in a sleigh, with high gales and zero weather over the long sand-bars, is his subscription-rate—"twenty-five winter numbers for fifty cents, often in arrears," as he regretfully informed me—excessive?

The need of a paper up there is all the greater because the only other way of spreading information is

through the church. Sunday is the big day. Every road is black with fishermen, their wives, and progeny. "The French kids is more numerouser'n ours," an English settler regretfully admits. But French and English alike stream toward sonorous bells in many steeples. Ancient buggies, two-wheeled carts or even detached pairs of front wheels hauled by the hardy ponies that mind no hills, convey most of the multitude.

After church it strikes you as odd to see a Frenchman jump up into his cart and begin auctioning off fields of hay or what-not. Bidding is lively, bargains soon made. After all, what harm? Here's the only place where everybody's gathered together. Better the day, better the deed.

The men all foregather to gossip and smoke, while the women congregate in their own group to gossip, alone. For the groups to mingle would be shocking, unheard-of. As for women smoking at any time, it's totally unknown. The only concessions to modernity are some bobbed heads and short skirts; but I-saw silk stockings only twice. Good old King Cotton still holds sway.

"Women smoke cigarettes an' wear pants in your country?" an islander asked me, half incredulous and half horrified. "No, sir, nobody never see the like o' that in the Magdaleens. Jing! I don't know what our folks'd do if they ever see a woman in pants, with a cigarette. Drop dead, likely." After a pause he added: "All they ever smoke up here is a herrin'. Women's women, here, not a kind o' make-believe men. An' we think high of 'em, too. There ain't enough English ones to go round. So lots of our boys can't get married. Take a French gal? No, *sir!*"

The French feel just the same about marrying the English. Birds of a feather—! Among the French, every autumn a regular epidemic of matrimony breaks out like a rash.

"We are too busy for marrying in the summer, *mossieu*," a friendly Acadian explained. "But in the autumn, not so much work and fishing. So thirty, forty couples get married. And ah, the spruce-beer, the fiddles, the dances, and feasts! *C'est magnifique!*"

In winter the women spin their home-grown wool on old-fashioned wheels, weave homespun cloth, make shawls and patchwork quilts, knit, hook rugs, and do fancy-work. What a place for genuine antiques! Life in the Magdalens is a serious business, lived not for learning or amusement but for work.

March brings the pack-ice and the seals that put the islands in an uproar. The men come running with knives, clubs, gaffs, and rifles, while the women stand on the shore with refreshments and hot coffee. Seal-hunting is severe and perilous toil. The islanders take "flats" or small open boats with them, to cross "glades" of open water or to return with, in case the floes drift abroad. Feverishly they work, for "sculps" or skins may bring as high as five dollars. An unusually big hood-seal may be worth as much as ten.

Spring and summer mean the fisheries of cod, herring, mackerel, and lobster. Twenty-five thousand barrels are an average exportation of herring. Farm-work fills up odd times. All crops do well, especially potatoes.

"We ain't got a potato-bug on the islands," a native told me. "Never had one. Don't have to spray here.

Don't have no oxen, saddle-hosses or saddles, frogs, toads, snakes—¹—an' no Americans neither. Not a one!"

Summer is the time for repairing wharves wrenched by winter's devastating gales and ice-pressures. One old fellow I know of had a job at two dollars a day for rough carpentering. A certain day he paid another man three dollars to do his work, while he himself stood round smoking his pipe and directing every operation.

"And what was that for?" I asked. "You lost a dollar on that, didn't you?"

"Ah, yes, sir, I did so," he admitted. "But that's the only time in me life I ever hired a man. An' 'twas well worth a dollar to me, sir, bein' boss of a job for one whole day!"

One of the queerest Magdalen customs is that of communal coaling. The coal, from Cape Breton, is landed from schooners directly on the open beaches. Thence the islanders cart it up out of the sea's way and pile it in the fields. All hands turn to, with every available horse, to deliver it to the houses. It's a real coaling-bee.

"Most important job we got to do, sir. Coal is life to us. So we all helps each other an' makes kind of a lark of it."

A really beautiful sight is the interior of a smoke-house, with nearly a million herring all contentedly adangle. Most lovely indeed are their hues of black and gold and rich warm brown. And what odor more appetizing? If you've never seen a smoker in full blast, a treat is awaiting you.

Once you've been to the Magdalens you'll never

forget the smell of herring being smoked. A "smoke-stand" in full blast is worth seeing—and scenting. You'd think it was afire. Dense clouds drift out through the shingles. Inside you see perhaps a hundred fires banked with sawdust, glowing in a cavernous gloom. High overhead, tiers of men are handing up the long "skivvers" on each of which boys and girls have transfixed twenty herring by the gills. Each "bay" contains 27,000 fish, so a "30-bay house" holds more than 800,000. And for six weeks all these herring have to be moved, from time to time; started at the bottom and gradually transferred to the top. Dim figures move, coughing, through the reek.

"It's bad at times," the boss admits. "Workin' 'em in the smoke, if you're weak-lunged you'll fail out an' begin bleedin' to the mouth. Won't get right bed-fast, but get a cough on you as'll hang a long time, an' you'll get creosote in your lungs from the wood. You'll likely go smoke-blind, too. I been blind myself more'n once. But one good thing, if you work in a smoker you won't never die o' the consumption."

"The smoke cooks the T. B. bugs?" I queried.

"What's them? Somethin' like bluebottle flies?"

"Well—kind of." And I let it go at that.

Odd, but the Magdalen French still use that wonderful old-time word *boucaner* for "smoking" a herring. Centuries ago, the hard-fighting beef-raiders and smokers in the Caribbean used that very word, and thus when they transformed to pirates they were called "buccaneers." I thought the word *boucaner* was dead, ages past; but no, far up among those misty northern isles I heard it still upon the lips of living men. Strange, eh?

You find precious little real amusement on the Magdalens. The boys play some football, and in winter there's a bit of skating and hockey, but for the most part the Magdaleners aren't given to diversions. Though trout are found in the lakes, you can imagine a postman would just about as soon be invited out for a walk as a Magdalen cod-fisher to go trouting. The only big event of the year is the October fair, at Amherst. It's like any country fair on a small scale, minus the horse-racing. That racing takes place in winter, on the ice of a lagoon near Etang du Nord.

"With proper trottin' sulkies, sir, an' purses for the half, three quarters, an' mile. Four to six horses entered each race," Frank Burke informed me. "Once in a while we have a little dance, but not so much as the French. Five or six housefuls o' them gets together an' has a regular party. No clubs or lodges. Shows? Magic-lantern, some odd time or other. An' a movie come here one summer. It cleaned up a lot o' money every night for a month, in a tent.

"Know what I'd like for amusement, though? I'd like to drive all over the islands, in cold weather when the sand's froze good—explore every sand-bar, nick, an' corner. Lots o' bracin' wind then. Could do it all in a month. Like to go?"

"Rather!" I agreed. "If there's anything I'd love, it would be a month's driving in a buggy over frozen sand-bars, especially in a gale and snow-storm."

"It'd sure be nice," affirmed Burke. "The inter-island mail carriers go all winter. Find their way over the dunes by poles stuck down every few yards."

"Great job, that!" And Burke readily agreed that it was.

During my stay a thrilling diversion took place, such as hadn't been known for years—a real court case. People turned out in crowds, all business was suspended, a picnic was staged. A white-whiskered judge arrived from Quebec. From all the islands spectators poured into Amherst via the "local boat."

"It's the secretary o' the school board, accused of bein' short in his accounts," some one explained. "He claims he can show where every penny went, honest, but it's quite a time for us!"

The case was continued a year, so by now the Magdalens must have had another treat. To get the proper perspective, you must know these islands are one of the most law-abiding communities on earth. Queerly enough, the "Magdalens" have never had an illegitimate birth, while the "Virgins" have a tremendously high rate of such. What's in a name, anyhow? The Magdalens are governed by sixteen councilors annually elected. Four mayors, with a few local magistrates and justices of the peace, represent the Law. Ah, but I forget the jailer, also the bailiff. When an arrest is necessary, say once every five or ten years, they both have to go and make it. The jail is at Amherst. Being jailer is an arduous task. The poor fellow has to sweep out, semi-occasionally, and open the court session once a year—if there's anybody to be tried, which there mostly isn't.

"But he gets his salary just the same," an ancient mariner remarked. "In fifty-one years we've only had two convictions as landed fellers in the pen. Both was for enterin' a store and stealin'. We ain't never had a hold-up or street robbery. A man could lay down anywhere outdoors here an' go to sleep with his pockets

full o' money, an' wake up with all of it. Nobody locks their doors here. Why would they? Nobody steals!"

"Same with us in the States," I replied. "All our big cities are like that; New York and all of 'em."

"We had a moonshiner 'rested last winter, but he didn't go to jail."

"That, too, has a familiar sound. But how about murders and such?"

"Never had a one since the islands was first cleared o' pirates, and settled. No knifin's or shootin's whatever. One or two accidents, sir, but that's all."

"Same as with us, too—especially in Chicago."

He gave me a suspicious look and presently withdrew to mingle with the holiday throng so eagerly hoping for a conviction of the school board secretary. A day of thrills and great rejoicing, that was indeed, at Havre Aubert!

No wonder they make merry while they can, these hardy islanders! Swiftly the flash of summer passes and down once more settles the interminable white winter, when for months on end they must be a world unto themselves—months when neither sail nor smoke vexes the frozen horizon, until at last with spring some of the Newfoundland sealing-steamers crash their way into the Gulf.

Though now air navigation has stopped all possibility of actual starvation, the islanders still remember when winter might mean just that. One of the old-timers will tell you:

"'Twas an awful famine we had in eighty-two. Potato crop failed, an' the ship bringin' our winter's supplies got lost with 'leven men. Afore New Year we was sufferin' desperate. Flour wa'n't to be had for

its weight in gold. But heaven was good to us at last, an' a big ship loaded wi' provisions got wracked on the ice off Coffin Island. All hands turned out, sir, an' we drawed a new lease o' life. I was one o' them as run out over the lolly ice, at the risk o' me life, to get grub.

"An' in nineteen hundred and eight, after navigation closed, our cable busted an' we had no communication wi' the main. 'Twas an old woman as thought o' what to do. 'Send the mail ashore in a cask,' says she, 'and ask for help!' So we collected a lot o' letters, sealed 'em all up into a tin box, then got a molasses-tierce an' put the box inside. We ballasted the tierce, coopered her up, nailed a tin sail on, an' painted 'MAGADALEN ISLANDS' MAIL' on the sides. Big crowd went to see us la'nch her at West P'int, first o' February. She got picked up a hundred and fifteen miles off, in Cape Breton, after eight days. First results we had was when Cap'n Barbour o' the Newfoundland sealer *Labrador* got jammed in the ice four mile from the islands an' we walked out to him. He told us the tierce had landed an' the relief steamer *Stanley* was comin' out—which she done, bringin' mail an supplies."

All this is lonely enough, but nothing beside Brion Island and the Bird Rocks, ten and sixteen miles beyond Grosse Ile. Brion, rolling and fertile, is visited by some hundred fishermen in season, but is otherwise unspeakably desolate. Even rats can't live there. Tracks of them have been seen on ice, going ashore from wrecks, but they've always died. Many a vessel has left her bones there; many a crew, saved from the

ever-foaming breakers, has actually starved to death there or been brought nigh to cannibalism. Yet two families dwell on that remote bit of earth—the light-keeper's, and that of a well-to-do farmer with two sons and two daughters.

"They all got money," Magdaleners say. "But they only get mail when open boats can cross over, and that's rare. Oldest daughter is thirty-three, born there, and never was to the main islands but once. She's never seen a movie nor an auto." Can you imagine anything like that?

Still more terrible are North Bird and Great Bird—les Rochers aux Oiseaux—where Cartier reported the "sea-birds more numerous than grasses in a meadow." North Bird is just a pair of low, cruel ledges. God help any ship that touches them in fog or blizzard! Another vessel "Posted as Missing" at Lloyd's. A perilous channel leads to Great Bird, fitting place to conjure up *Robinson Crusoe* nightmares of isolation. Its immense cliffs leap more than a hundred feet straight out of churning breakers. Steep concrete steps in a great slash cut through the sullen red rock lead up from a tiny platform where you can land only on the very calmest days.

"Lighthouse tender sometimes waits three weeks afore she can put supplies ashore," an ancient informs you. "Couple o' men once landed to repair the light, an' had to stay nearly a month afore they could get off again. The tender watches her chanst, drifts in, waits for three big seas, then makes a landin' and has ten minutes, after which she has to stand off again. Some place!"

For only \$1,200 a year Montague Arsenault keeps

that most desolate of lights, his only contacts with the world being a radio and a telephone cable to North Cape. He's monarch of all he surveys, his kingdom containing one wife, three children, and an assistant. The said kingdom is only 770 yards long by 270 wide, and bears no vegetation save a little scanty grass. Besides his dwelling and the light-tower, he has nothing to see but the powder-house, the 3,000-gallon rain-water pit in the rock, the bastion where his cannon booms in foggy weather, and the flagstaff where each morning he hoists the Union Jack.

Ever since 1923 these six persons have held this terrible post. Winters are frightful beyond words. For months the Gulf is blocked by ice. No ship in sight, not even a smoke. Perched high on their sky-roost of seven snow-buried acres, sometimes with eighty-mile gales screaming over and the glass marking thirty below zero, those few humans exist as no prisoners do. Implacable Nature immures them. Nowhere to go, nothing to do. Can you imagine it?

Spring and summer bring added misery when uncountable myriads of gannets, puffins, and guillemots come flocking. Their deafening clamor, the reek of their nests, and their fish fragments that litter the cliffs make Great Bird a gehenna. Yet the keeper's only complaint is that he's not allowed to leave in the fall. But no, he must be on the job when navigation opens. So there he has to stay all winter. If he went ashore in autumn, Lord knows when he might be able to get back!

Some appalling tragedies have taken place in that stark inferno. Once the keepers ran out of provisions, and during a long spell of bad weather came near can-

nibalism before help arrived. The "Bird Rock Disaster" is still talked of.

"That was thirty year ago, sir," a grizzled old sea-dog tells you. "There was John Turbid, John Pigeon, an' Paul Chenel, an' they had to fire the cannon in case o' fog. Rule was they must only carry three charges o' powder to the gun at once, but they carried a whole barr'l. Gun back-fired an' the primin'-cap flew into the barr'l. Turbid was blowed nigh off the rock, but he lived. Pigeon an' Chenel, though, was blowed to bits, an' so was a little boy there. Three dead. An' Lord, man! what a fix the survivors was into afore help come!"

Then there was the Whalen case. Whalen was light-keeper. He and his son and an assistant named Joe Pigeon ventured out on ice one March, after seals. But let the sea-dog tell it:

"They got their load o' seals, sir, started back in their galvanized iron flat through glades o' water, but got carried far to looard o' the Rock. Whalen an' his son froze to death that night. Pigeon, he was 'bout dead too, but next mornin' he could still see the Rock, far away. He laid the bodies on the ice, left the boat, an' started afoot over the lolly. Got to Great Bird that afternoon. The bodies was never seen again. Whalen's wife went nigh-hand to crazy. 'Twas a long time afore she an' Pigeon was relieved. Ships couldn't get to 'em, even though somethin' was seen wrong with the light. Terrible time, sir!

"Then, twenty years ago, Télésphore Turbid an' his son was keepers. They hired Damien Deveaux an' his wife, Annie, to stay with 'em. All three men got adrift on ice after seals. Deveaux an' Turbid froze stiff. The

son floated 'way to Cape Breton, an' died of freezin' there. Annie Deveau was left all alone on the Rock to tend the light, till a ship could rescue her. What a story that'd make for a paper, sir, if 'twas all wrote out proper-like, eh?"

Poor in so many things, the Magdaleners are rich in tales of suffering and heroism. But heroism is at a discount there. Just as Shaw says that "in heaven an angel is nobody in particular," so a hero in the Magdalens is the merest commonplace fellow. Take the case of Allan Clarke. In the States he would certainly have won Carnegie awards. On the Magdalens no one thinks anything of his feat. No one, Clarke himself least of all.

"Two of our men got adrift," William Burke told me, smoking on his little porch one evening while the northern lights pulsed in pale splendor to the zenith, August though it was. "It's bad, sir, goin' adrift. I been there myself, and only saved my life by drinkin' seals' blood. These here fellers, Welsh and Chenel, got lost in a regular winter-weather gale, thick o' snow, an' ten below zero. They was blowed in their little boat from Amherst nigh to Cape Breton, fifty miles, an' then back again by a shift o' the gale to Grand Entry. Three days they was out, with nothin' to eat but a little dry flour, an' Chenel got froze so bad he had to later cut off one of his thumbs an' two fingers with a hack-saw.

"Well, when they come in over the bar to Grand Entry, their boat stuck in the shore ice, churnin' like it'd grind their boat to matchwood. Allan Clarke an' John Payson crawled out on thin ice toward 'em.

Clarke went the farthest, three miles. He had two dory oars an' a rope. Times the ice'd open, and in the trock o' the waves he could see the clam-shells on the bottom. Then again he had to climb up over rafted ice, high as a house. But he rove a line to the boat, hauled her an' them two men back nigh enough to shore so men could hitch horses to it an' pull it up. Seven an' a half hours Clarke was workin', with his clothes froze like a board.

"Reward? What for? Oh, yes, I heard tell he did get a medal or somethin'. But why would anybody reward him for a little thing like that?"

I asked Clarke discreetly about his medal.

"Gorry, *I* dunno where 'tis!" quoth he. "Kickin' round somewheres, I guess."

After a little sleuthing I located the medal where it had been carelessly tossed into a drawer of the steward's desk, aboard the *Lovat*. A beautiful bronze medal with a blue ribbon, it had been awarded by the Canadian Humane Association. The steward unquestioningly gave it to me, and I returned it to Clarke, who seemed mildly surprised.

"There she is, now," was all he said. "Jinks, I *knowed* she was knockin' round some place another!"

When it comes to being a celebrity in the Magdalens, a human being hasn't a chance. There Fame has definitely lighted on the brow of an equine. From one end of the archipelago to the other, everybody knows Farmer, the celebrated ocean-going steed of Entry Island. The story is in this wise:

Farmer was traded for another horse by his owner, Richard McClean, in March, 1925. McClean walked



© *Canadian National Railways.*

A barren land of melancholy charm.



Bird Rock, desolate outpost of the Magdalens.



Hand-spinning still survives in the far isles.



© *Canadian National Railways.*

Quaint as Breton fishing-scenes are those of the Magdalens.

the horse off the island in stormy weather, over the ice-bridge, three miles to Sandy Hook on Amherst. Thence by easy stages he drove across Amherst, Grindstone, Wolf, and Grosse Ile, and the total of more than thirty miles of treacherous sand-bars that connect them. These shifting dunes and quicksands can be traversed at low tide by natives who well know the exact way. Here or there channels have to be forded. One such channel is half a mile wide, and at times the driver has to stand up in the seat, with water all around him. If the horse begins to sink, cut him the whip and run him across! Drivers usually carry ropes, in case of trouble, though how a man with a rope can pull a horse out of a quicksand I don't quite see. Motor-cars—of which seven now run on the Magdalens—often make the trip. At good speed there's not much danger, though the spray flies as from a battleship.

To return, however, to our amphibious horse, Farmer. His master delivered him at East Point to the new owner, who in the spring turned him out to grass on the dunes. Farmer stayed quietly there till June, biding his time, waiting for the grass to reach its height.

"'Twas then he started," McClean told me, when I made a special nine-mile trip in a small motor-boat on a rough day, over to Entry Island for a personal talk about the horse. "He walked right back, more'n sixty miles, the very way I drove him. Stopped at the same places, comin' back, we did goin' east. Finally reached Amherst, stayed there a few days, an' even visited the blacksmith shop. Blacksmith told me later if he'd knowed what the hoss was forelayin' to do,

he'd have put a set o' shoes on him. But he didn't know. How could he? Nobody could, sir!

"Farmer waited his chance for a good day, an' then walked out to the end o' Sandy Hook. Some folks think a hoss can't see very far, but I know better. He saw three miles to Entry, all right; an' what's more, he knowed how to get there. He waited till the tide was exactly right, so it wouldn't carry him out to sea. Then he waded in the ocean an' struck out.

"Did he make it? He did so! Several seen him swimmin', and they claim a boat couldn't pass him, sailin'. In less'n half an hour he come aground on Entry. Reckon he'd done five mile in all, way the tide drifted him. But he wasn't much tired. Just shook himself, an' trotted back to his stall. Trade him again, sir? Sell him? Not if I know it! He's seven, now, an' here's where he's goin' to live an' die, safe an' sound!"

In this love of his native heath—or sand and rock—Farmer is a real Magdalen Islander. Whatever the larger world may offer, only these islands mean home. As, after a week and five days, the *Lovat* once more carried me southward, while the island peaks faded back into all-blurring mists, I realized that even such far and lonely places have their own peculiar melancholy charm. But my pensive reveries were a bit troubled by a difficult problem in mathematics. I tried to think it out:

"First week cost me seven dollars. Right enough. Then I paid for another week. Seven bucks additional. Righto! But when I left unexpectedly in five days of the second week, I owed ten in all for that week, and had to pay three more.

"In other words, if I'd stayed two days longer, it would have cost me three dollars less!"

Can anybody figure that out? *I* can't—and I'm not going to try!

VIII

BIRD KEY

How Mr. and Mrs. Tern and All the Little Terns Keep House Down in the Gulf of Mexico

WHILE we were still miles away, a long dark line arose out of the Gulf.

"That's solid birds," said Skipper Willis of the swift little Coast Guard boat 181. "If it wasn't for them, you couldn't see Bird Key from here at all. Seems like all the birds in the world is down there, now!"

Binoculars revealed a swarming blur of wings that thickened the air above scant vegetation on an island of coral sand; a haze of flights extending far over the ineffable azure of that tropic sea. As our speedster approached the Tortugas Islands and dropped anchor off grim old Fort Jefferson, to my ears drifted a vague, distant, and continuous tumult—the communal clamor of America's greatest tern rookery. Sixty-odd miles from Key West, there I beheld it, in some ways the most amazing place on earth.

"Sure you can visit it if you don't do no harm," the keeper of the island gave permission. He pointed to a warning sign:

U. S. BIRD RESERVATION

Whoever shall hunt, trap, capture, wilfully disturb or kill any bird, or take or destroy the eggs of such birds on any lands of the U. S., set apart as refuges, shall be fined not more than \$500 or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.

"Sure, but be careful," adjured the keeper. Charles Park is his name, and what he doesn't know about terns—! With his wife and kids, and an assistant warden, he lives four months a year at the old fort where Dr. Mudd was once imprisoned, and watches Bird Key only a mile to southward. No longer can Cuban poachers rob this rookery, which Audubon himself in 1832 first brought to the world's attention. The greatest of all bird-lovers then reported that a single crew of Havana "egggers" would take eight tons of eggs a trip, making weekly trips and selling the eggs for seventy cents a gallon! Later, demands of millinery added a wholesale slaughter of adult birds to the destruction of their eggs.

How any species could survive such ruthless persecution is a mystery, even though terns, if robbed, will lay again and again. But the two kinds at Bird Key—"sooties" and "noddies"—now safely protected by Uncle Samuel, are still doing business at the old stand. Investigate, and you're surely in for some new sensations.

I let no Gulf weed grow under my feet, but at once asked Warden Park to take me in his motor-boat over to the reservation. Dr. Marion S. Lombard of the Public Health Service at Key West went along too; and so did Skipper Willis. As we chugged away, four miles west of us lay Loggerhead Key with the Carnegie

Marine Biological Laboratory, whose scientists have deeply studied at Bird Key. But we forgot all about Science when our engine expired and we couldn't resurrect it. Does a thoroughly reliable motor-boat engine exist? I've never met one! Anyhow, we had to paddle with two slim poles, a gas-pipe and a broom lashed to a stick. If you've ever tried to propel a heavy motor-boat at sea by any such means—but never mind, it's a long sea-lane that has no "turning," and we got there just the same.

As you draw near the triangular sand-bar, maybe a quarter-mile long, containing less than five acres and nowhere more than six feet above sea-level, all about you the swift, fork-tailed birds gradually thicken. The flying tumult increases. The haze of wings covering the island like a blur of mosquitos resolves into agile-darting, soaring, wheeling thousands of birds; aërial companies, regiments, armies past all computation or belief. Some you see—maneuvering with long-stroked flight—have white foreheads, gray crowns, dark brown bodies, and nearly black tails, also a peculiar white streak under the large, dark eye.

"Them's the noddies," Park shouts through the turmoil. "Them others, with the snow-white breast an' the black backs, is sooties. Mebbe they'll grow seventeen inches long, an' nigh three foot wing-spread. Just a trifle bigger'n the noddies. Ten or fifteen times as many sooties as noddies, too. Not so very diff'rent to look at, but they sure got diff'rent ways of keepin' house, doin' business, an' all!"

It seems strange that two such closely allied birds—much like our mackerel gull in the North, only far

more beautiful and graceful—could have got along for centuries together, so intimately yet so distinctly. Unlike human races, they've never intermingled, and their fights are harmless. Almost nothing is known of their lives, diet, or travels, except at nesting-time; which makes Bird Key one of the most important places in the world for studying bird psychology and behavior.

You find, as you approach the island, that every old pile, stake, and buoy is laden with noddies. The sooties, on the other hand, never rest when away from the nesting-site. Both species fly through the vacant windows and cover the roof of the old building that, once the warden's house, has now been partly engulfed by the sea that's steadily changing the shape of the sand-bar, making it lower and longer. Now and then storms that threaten utterly to destroy the island wash gruesome relics from the sand—skeletons of yellow-fever victims who in Civil War days, as we have already seen, died at Fort Jefferson and were buried here.

But little you're thinking of old times. The present is quite enough, thank you! Confusion grips your senses; the excitement of being in-terned, as it were, obliterates all else. The hurly-burly grows truly dazing. Louder, ever more loud, mounts the assailing racket. The clamor swells to a riotous, immense, and formidable scream, a frantic babel of protest against invasion by Man, arch-enemy of nearly all wild life. "Our idea of Heaven," it seems to say, "is a place without Men!" The uproarious tumult becomes a continuous and deafening hue and cry, such as you must hear to understand. Ever the whirling flights thicken. You begin to feel dizzy. All is a chaotic turmoil, high above which with

calm indifference companies of man-o'-war hawks soar and wheel.

Wonderful birds, these, on piracy bent. From their vast height these bandits complacently view their farm, their larder. Some naturalists deny that man-o'-war hawks—otherwise frigate-birds—eat young terns. But if so, why do they gather here in such numbers, after tern hatching-time? Sometimes hundreds will congregate at Bird Key. What for? Everybody knows how they steal fish from honest sea-fowl. Their whole life is one of buccaneering. Just to see them asoar, or perched with watchful waiting on the island, makes you feel them guilty. Each time one flies close to the sand a terrific uproar follows. Despite the screaming whirls and the savage attacks of the noddies, I believe that now or then a frigate-bird gets away with a young tern. Pirates of the sky!

But never mind. Other matters are more vital. You scramble through warm surf, and find yourself in the only place where these terns are known to nest in the United States. A barren island it is, too, of glaring hot white sand, coral, and shells, with only a few stunted cocoanut-palms, gray-green bay-cedars, some fleshy weeds and a little Bermuda-grass. You plow through windrows of dead eggs washed up by the tide. Nature has evidently not yet taught these birds to avoid high-water mark or storm-waves in making their nests. Thousands of birds leap screaming into the air, but more cling to their home-sites. *Kerrup! Kerrup! Kerr-kerr-KERRRRR!* they shriek on a rising note, with wide-open bills.

The chorus grows dazing. You can't hear yourself think. Vociferating hordes face you, stand threatening

you with wings aflutter and chattering beaks. A whooping uproar explodes about you. The terns look scrappy as pugilists. You become a *Gulliver* in a land of frantically hostile *Lilliputians*. Just so might a nation of unarmed men screech at an invading Behemoth. How human the birds seem! You think of Anatole France's "Penguin Island," where they *were* near-human. Round your ducking head vast swarms hover and chirr in vortexes of flight like Doré's pictures of the streaming soul-multitudes of Inferno.

Peck-peck! That, for you! Without your cap, those formidable and needle-sharp bills would draw blood. Even through your cap your scalp tingles. Birds, birds, birds! Good Lord, where in the world, or out of it, did so many birds ever come from?

And crabs too! Everywhere crabs. Ghost-crabs—sly, predatory little villains. Indifferent to all the din and hubbub, they sidle innocently among the terns, with robbery in their cold, crabbish hearts. The frigate-birds are out-and-out banditti, yeggs, gunmen of the avian world. The crabs, though—

"Sneak-thieves!" Dr. Lombard shouts in my ear. You *have* to shout on Bird Key. "Look innocent, but—look at that one, now, with a young noddy!"

The ghost-crab is scuttling down a sandy slope, away from a grassy hummock, with a little dead chick, one wing of which is partly eaten off. We rob the ghost and summarily execute it. *One* crab, at least, won't steal any more eggs or young birds. Maybe it's only the dead birds they're after, but I wouldn't put it past them to grab a juicy young live one, left unguarded. These pale malefactors, with the most casual air, promenade sideways through the rookery, which seems for

all the world like an immense city of houses all alike and all set down at random, thousands upon thousands of them. When the crabs find an undefended nest, you can see them contemplatively clawing the egg or eggs—a nest sometimes holds two.

“Shall I try to get away with it?” each seems debating. Their little game may be to find a pipped egg and then devour the contents, or maybe they are willing to wait for the little stranger to appear, all draggly wet and so weak that it can’t resist. You see lots of young terns like that, and some that contentedly live in the cracked shell for hours before emerging. It’s odd how little attention the old birds pay to the cradle-robbing crabs. Occasionally you see a parent listlessly pecking one; but for the most part these crustaceous *Uriah Heeps* snoop around unmolested. You even find two quarreling over a chick. One drives the other off.

“It ain’t your tern, this time!” he insists. “It’s my tern, see?”

To know what it’s all about you must understand something of the mysterious life of the tern nation. Mysterious is right; not even the ornithologists know much tern history, away from Bird Key. Where do these terns go; what do they eat; are they gregarious or solitary? Riddles! About all you can find out is right on this tiny island of hot, glaring white sand. Most of the terns’ life-story is unknown.

Why do they always come to the Tortugas Islands, and above all why to so unpromising a dot in the ocean as Bird Key, when other well-shaded islands lie close at hand? Lack of shade, caused by recent hurricanes, is said to be killing off at least the noddies. Dr. Paul

Bartsch, the eminent biologist of the United States National Museum, says they're decreasing—though you'd never believe it! The lack of shade must also be hard on the sooties. Still, both species refuse to change their home. Perhaps the presence of enormous schools of minnows at Bird Key caused the terns, centuries ago, to choose this site. The arrival and departure of the tern armies may depend on the migration and spawning season of their favorite fish.

However that may be, we know the terns have been coming here since beyond all memory of man. Every spring some compelling force inexorably drives them northward to this tiny furnace of sand. Usually they arrive about the end of April.

"We don't know their rowt," explains Warden Park, "but only that they gen'ally comes from the south or sou'west. No use tryin' to move 'em to better quarters. Birdologists has tried it. They've built rafts an' put nests with eggs aboard 'em, and tried to kind of gradually ease some o' the colony over to Sand Key, where they's lots o' shade. But would them old terns go? *Nah-sir!* They've allus abandoned their nests an' stayed right here. And I reck'n they'll keep on stayin' here till the last grain o' sand is washed away. That's their story and they're goin' to stick to it!"

It's almost miraculous that all these thousands of free, wild fowl, wide-scattered over a boundless tropical sea, are each year suddenly and at the same time struck by an imperative urge to revisit just this sandy little furnace where now and then the temperature runs to more than 140 degrees. It's so hot there, that I've seen the birds by thousands brooding their eggs to keep them cool! All sitting with their heads away from

the sun, they ward the solar rays from the precious eggs. What's more, they occasionally go to the surf, wet their breast-feathers, and return to moisten the eggs and thus cool them. Otherwise the eggs would soon be almost hard-boiled. If that isn't putting the "reverse English" on incubation, what is?

The aerial armies no sooner arrive than they "get busy" and begin nest-building and fighting. Fighting, indeed! You can't be on the island five minutes without seeing a dozen pitched battles. Of all quarrelsome creatures, commend me to these birds! The noddies almost always have a chip on their shoulders—or, rather, a stick in their bills. Sticks and weeds are their treasures. Fear of having some stolen from their nests makes them savage—that, and carrying round a name like *Anous stolidus*, which means "without mind, and stupid." The sooties' particular grievance is any encroachment on their nesting sites. Sticks mean nothing in the sooties' lives, for they merely dig saucerlike holes in the sand. Their job is to hold a place in the sun. The war that results almost beggars description. Every encroachment is furiously punished. The birds seem to have a human sense of property rights, and fight almost as savagely as civilized nations. Can one say more?

Screaming thousands of sooties battle to protect their homesteads against late-comers. Each pair tries to hold a circular space of one to two feet in diameter. Others, seeking to take up land, stumble into this sacred territory. To arms! The war is on! Usually the combatants get off-side into still other sites, and thus the conflict spreads. Sooties ten or fifteen feet away rush into the Donnybrook Fair. Confusion grows

worse confounded. Day and night the fearful hulla-baloo of pitched battle continues. You wonder that any sooties are left intact, to carry on.

Mr. and Mrs. Sooty—or *Sterna fulginosa*, if you like—usually avoid the beach, rarely nesting lower than the fringe of bushes at high-tide level. An old snag of driftwood makes a good site. Their house-keeping arrangements are simplicity itself. The birds merely put their breasts to the ground and with a sort of wallowing movement turn about, kicking the sand away backward. A quarter-hour, and home is ready for the usually single egg. Some nests show two eggs, but you never know that one hasn't been stolen from a neighbor. Now or then the sooties gather a few bay-cedar leaves to edge their nests. Again, they don't even dig a hole, but just lay the egg on the flat sand. Not at all particular; any old thing does for the sooties.

The noddies, on the contrary, for all their alleged brainlessness, are more ambitious architects. Even now, with only a few bay-cedars and cacti left by the last hurricane, they do their best to carry on the old tradition of bush-nesting. They build loosely with sticks, straws, and seaweed, and even add bits of shell and coral so nearly like the protective coloration of their eggs that you can hardly see these. The sooty's egg is likewise safeguarded by its tints. You've got to look sharp and walk gingerly, anywhere on Bird Key, to avoid stepping on eggs. Oddly enough, instinct doesn't teach the noddies to stop making nests so shallow that sometimes eggs and fledglings are blown to the ground.

"The moment they gets to the island they goes to work," the warden explains. "First come, first served.

They grabs nests from past years and keeps addin' to 'em, till the nests gets like that there one, f'rinstance." And he pointed out a truly immense structure. "The noddies as gets here late has to build new nests. You'll see this whole island alive with 'em, carryin' sticks and stuff, and dodgin' other noddies that's out to rob 'em. Sometimes you'll see a successful noddy scootin' afoot or flyin' for dear life in and out among dozens o' less fortunate neighbors. Two birds'll sometimes fight in mid-air for a stick. If one of 'em drops it, t'other one'll ketch it on the wing afore it hits sand or water. They're very wild when they're buildin', but if they've got a stick, they don't seem to mind you much. You can allus bust up one fight and start a lot more by throwin' a handful o' sticks to 'em. Give a noddy a stick, sir, an' it don't mind nothin' else in this world!"

The noddies never build on the bare ground, but, even when they can't find a bush, use a few of their precious sticks or a little tuft of grass. Both Mr. and Mrs. Noddy bring materials and shape them with clumsy, intermittent pecks and pulls; both sit in the nest and form it by turning round and round. They're shameless thieves and hence are always in a battle.

During all the nest-building, which lasts several days, Mrs. N. does no fishing, but depends on friend husband to feed her. He works a while with her at the nest, then flies away for fish and leaves the Mrs. to guard their home. Without her it would soon be pulled apart by envious poachers. Mr. N.'s fishing usually occupies a couple of hours, during which Mrs. N. may go for a drink, but she never stays long. She dozes and waits. When Mr. N. comes back with a cropful

of minnows, she wakes up and you understand why they're called "noddies."

It's wonderful to penetrate slowly into the screeching, protesting rookery, then sit down and wait till the terns resume their usual life. You can see them turning the eggs with their beaks, or most affectionately cherishing these treasures under their soft breasts. But the ceremony that makes this a Land of Nod is most curious of all. Such manners! Facing each other, Mr. and Mrs. Noddy bow and scrape to each other, over and over again. Then Mr. puts down his bill and Mrs. feeds from it. If he's unwilling to make good, she sharply strikes his beak to make him "cough up." Almost human! While eating, Mrs. N. makes a soft, rattling, nasal purr. Then they sit a while, nestling and nodding, probably handing each other taffy and compliments. They seem intensely absorbed in each other. Among birds, as among humans, are not lovers' conversations always interesting because they're always personal?

Politely bowing, Mr. Noddy sometimes brings his lady-love a few sticks, which he lays before her. Certainly no presents could be more valuable. He walks round his inamorata, puffing up his throat and putting his head over his back. She views him with a complacent eye. Accepting his fish and sticks constitutes legal marriage. Now or then an outsider lights near the courting pair. He bows repeatedly to them. They return the salute. Sometimes a whole group will be silently nodding, in the most decorous manner. Such polite birds (when they're not trying to murder each other) you never saw. Noddies, indeed!

No less impeccable than their courtesy is their tech-

nique as fishermen. The sooties, too, are first-class Izaak Waltons. Their watchword is Efficiency, with the accent on the "fish." It's strange that though they're both water-birds, neither species is a good swimmer. The noddies on a pinch can dive and swim, but they never do unless driven to it. When they accidentally fall in, the others make a great pother till the careless ones fly up again. The sooties are not only clumsy in the water, but soon grow waterlogged and drown. About their only contact with the actual sea is when they skim the surface to bathe and drink. Odd, eh?

At my first visit to Bird Key, night was coming on; yet ever since early daybreak the noddies and sooties had been hard at work. And on subsequent days I saw them always busily at it, with wonderful energy and skill. Their fishing method is to swoop low round the island—though sometimes you find them speeding as far as fifteen miles away, after schools of minnows. When some big fish chases a school and the small-fry break water to escape, you see the terns darting down, lightning-swift. Their snappy work is marvelous.

All day long they chase the harassed fish, shooting along the surface and picking them off wholesale. To waken the feeding reaction, they must see jumping minnows. If you offer a tern live fish on land, usually he refuses, unless starving. As soon as the minnows plunge, the group scatters. A moment later, another school breaks cover, and the flashing, swarming birds, with raucous shouts, dart thither. Immediately they begin gorging again. Their skill is perfect.

Hovering, swooping, you see the noddies step on the



Courtesy The Carnegie Institution.

Noddies at home in a bag-cedar bush.



A tern rookery, at close range.



Courtesy The Carnegie Institution.

Terns assembling to fight an invading heron.



Courtesy The Carnegie Institution.

When brooding, the sooties seem fearless of man.

creaming seas, strike the water with their breasts, then dart up again. All the time they're feeding they make a queer, rattling noise—louder as they sight the fish. As soon as Mr. Noddy has his gullet full, he flies higher, flirts his head, and twists his neck in a peculiar, sinuous way. Thus he shakes down the fish and is ready to start after more. When he has enough for his nesting wife's needs and his own, back he wings his way to her.

Less gallant, the sooty lets even a housekeeping wife go fishing for herself. Once in a blue moon, however, he'll feed her. On such occasions other sooties always intrude, which starts a free-for-all. No sooty ever misses a chance for an uproarious rumpus. Fighting and fishing are about the only occupations of the sooties, till the appearance of the egg puts an end to their wildness and their shrill, nasal battle-cries.

At nightfall you see both species swarming back to the island by thousands, flying swift and low. Darkness leaves the sea entirely deserted. But thereafter, whereas the noddies settle down like respectable married folk, for a good snooze, the sooties gad about all night long. Dozing only by cat-naps, they keep scolding and flying over the island till daybreak and fishing-time again.

"Most restless, noisy birds in the world, I reck'n," judges Warden Park. "No wonder they got 'emselfes the nickname o' 'wide-awake tern'!"

More precise impressions came with my second and other expeditions to Bird Key, the first visit being mostly a blur of jumbled and immense whirls of wings, a ferment of brain-stunning noises. Long ago Audubon best described the terns as—

Rising in swarms like those of bees in their hives, with cries that deafen one. . . . Cloud-like masses fly up. I felt as if the birds would raise me from the ground, so thick were they all around, and so quick the motion of their wings; their cries were indeed deafening. . . . All those engaged in incubation would arise in the air and scream aloud; those on the ground would join them as quickly as they could; and the whole, forming a vast mass with a broad-extended front, would charge us, pass over for fifty yards or so, then suddenly wheel around and again renew their attack. When we shouted, the phalanx would for an instant become perfectly quiet, as if to gather our meaning. But the next moment, like a huge wave breaking on a beach, it would rush forward with a deafening noise.

To me it seemed as if vast armies were cheering, so terrific was the uproar. As you advance into the rookery, thousands of angry-shrieking birds, "thick as autumnal leaves in Vallombrosa," face you with extended wings and open bills.

"Stop, thief! Robber!" they yell. "Fire, murder, police!"

Sit down quietly amid the myriad nests, and presently quietude returns. The colony begins attending to its own business and soon forgets you. But move even an arm or hand, the terrible screaming begins again. The terns resent motion. Keep still and you can sit within a foot of nesting birds and watch them to your heart's content.

A rare spectacle the colony is. Not an insect could I see. No doubt the birds devour all flies and mosquitos. Here or there small minnows were visible. And eggs, eggs, everywhere eggs! It doesn't seem possible there can be so many eggs in the world. The sooties usually lay one, though sometimes two, the first week

in May. By the middle of May thousands lie on the sand. Rarely do sooties hatch more than one chick. Their eggs are white or creamy buff, with burnt sienna blotches, grayish spots, or black scrawls. The noddy's single egg—laid from about May seventh to twenty-fifth—is creamy white, spotted with light gray, burnt umber, and walnut brown.

With the advent of the egg an amazing psychological change comes over both species. During nest-building they're wild, and leave home at any disturbance. But as soon as the egg appears they grow bold and savage, stick to the nest and defend it against even the dreaded human invader. They peck at you, but refuse to quit.

This sudden change in disposition is caused merely by sight and touch of an egg. Take it away and all boldness vanishes. And if you put an egg into a nest where none has yet been laid, the "brooding" reaction of boldness immediately follows, so that the bird will pick at you and "rattle" in its gruff, hoarse way. Not even an egg is needed. A white oval stone, an egg-shaped piece of chalk, or a china door-knob will quite as effectively fire the terns' bosoms to heroism. They're short on brains, but enormously long on instincts—whatever those are!

Other changes take place with the coming of the egg reaction. The males and females begin alternate watches, "tern and tern about," as you might say. With the noddies, these shifts take place about every two hours, Mr. and Mrs. N. becoming practically automata in fishing and in brooding the belovèd egg. Mr. now no longer feeds Mrs., but lets her look out for herself. The two usually spend little time together, though

now and then they visit a little, or join forces to fight off intruders. As one noddy returns to the nest it ordinarily exchanges salutations with the other, then pushes that other one aside and broods. The displaced one flies off. Now or then, if the absentee stays too long, the brooding one will go for a drink and to wet the breast-feathers, sometimes even leaving the egg exposed to the dangerous sun fifteen or twenty minutes. And at this stage, too, the noddies occasionally gather sticks and work at their nests, which are never really finished.

The sooties' shifts take place about every twenty-four hours, though a careless or recreant spouse may not show up in forty-eight. Most of the changes are made at night. You can see the brooding bird gently rocking the egg with its breast, or turning it with its beak. At times, Mr. Sooty will feed Mrs. at the nest, strutting, arching his neck, and playing the fop. Such feedings usually result in a lot of others trying to interfere, and then of course a knock-down-and-drag-out follows.

Sometimes a sooty will sit in stately quiet all day, surrounded by a bedlam of the most tempting battles, and never mix in at all. Beautiful, trim birds they are in repose, with their long black wings crossed scissors-wise behind. In action they're all red-pepper and steel springs. Usually they'd rather fight than eat. Restless and quarrelsome even when brooding, you often see a sooty jump from its eggs, run for a drink, and on the way back pause for a soul-satisfying battle-royal. Some of the grandest shindies are pulled off when the absentee tries to get back home.

You see one alighting some few feet from its nest

and attempting to scoot thither. Such a one has to run the gauntlet of hundreds of sharp beaks. It's a regular Kilkenny affair, and "an enjoyable time is had by all, in Bird City." There must be a drop of Irish in the sooties. They're never at peace unless they're at war. Where the absent sooty stays is a mystery. It goes to no other island, nor does it hang out at Bird Key, nor yet can it rest on the water. Can it keep steadily awing for perhaps forty-eight hours? Here's a puzzle for some enterprising ornithologist.

I was fortunate enough to be on the island in mid-June, when both the eggs and the fledglings were present in enormous numbers. The incubating period, by the way, is about thirty days. According to the last bird census (1908), 30,000 terns nest on Bird Key. But I'll eat every egg on the place, at \$500 fine apiece, if the number to-day isn't 50,000—or more. Dr. Lombard helped me make an estimate. We counted the total number of toes and divided by six, which gave our result. A hard job, as half the birds are always on the wing, crying, calling, gyrating, flinging their swift shadows askim over surf and foam and glaring, furnacelike sand. But anyhow, 50,000 is our story.

To return, however, to our muttons—in this case, baby noddies: the whole island is alive with the high-pitched, insistent "*Cheep-peep-peep!*" of these entertaining infants, the scolding and rasping defense-cries of the parents, and likewise their feeding-calls. Inside of five hours after hatching, the helpless little wet dabs of noddy life can stand on their wabby legs. At the end of the first day you see them pecking and yawning, with a soft little "*Querk-querk!*" that begs

for food. In three days they'll strike a human. Wonderfully swift development!

The parents—now more fiercely than ever attacking other noddies, as well as sooties and frigate-birds—alternately feed the young, on a two-hour schedule. *Tap-tap!* goes the baby's bill on the parent's. That's the signal for disgorging. The old birds fly home several times a day with laden crops, submissively extend their beaks, and let the infant members of this great Tern-Verein have lunch.

"More!" peeps Baby Noddy.

"That's all there is," says Ma. "There ain't no more!"

Peck-peck! Baby Noddy still keeps insisting. And the fond parent seems choking to death as she vainly tries to produce what she hasn't got. Human parents, please note.

The old noddies at first don't distinguish their own young from those of other noddies or even sooties. Put a sooty chick into a noddy nest and though the noddies will brood it, they'll let it starve to death. It doesn't give exactly the right feeding-signal, you see. Nature apparently has to work just so, or she won't work at all.

In a fortnight or less the young noddies are indulging in furious and prolonged fights with others of their kind, as they climb out of their nests and totter away to hide in bushes or behind bits of coral and driftwood. Often these imprudent infants can't get back into the nests, so the parents feed them outside. The old birds now revert to the egg-laying mentality and no longer defend their nests.

The old sooties show much the same reaction, and

after the first three days of aggressive defense gradually lose interest in home. The sooty babes learn to run and hide, or to stretch out flat on the sand and play 'possum. Their coloration is so like the sand that you must look sharp to see the little beggars. When an alarm is over, the old sooties make a peculiar clucking sound and the babies reappear. Parents and chicks call each other, so that Bird Key seems a poultry-yard on a tremendous scale.

I've seen one worried sooty trying to brood three and even four big chicks, and making bad work of it. Where she ever got such a family is a mystery. Providing for them must be something awful! Though the sooties feed their young at intervals of four to eight hours and at almost any time of day, evening gives you the best show. The whole island then is in a perfect turmoil. It's an exciting business, because at any moment, if a bit of fish is spilled, rank outsiders may dash in to seize it. I remember how one canny old bird, that had disgorged too fast, snatched up a bit of fish and gulped it again just to baffle an enterprising neighbor on larceny bent. Its mate, meantime, was standing off half a dozen trespassers. Lively doings! Family cares weigh heavily on all the terns.

"See how thin an' played-out some o' them birds are?" Warden Park asked, pointing out a few draggled specimens. "That's from overwork and half-starvation. 'Tain't to be wondered at, neither, when you figger a young bird'll eat mebbe forty minners a day. Them old uns has to go some to feed 'em. *I* wouldn't want the job!"

After a few days the parent sooties begin to recognize their own children and refuse to feed others.

Never is any young sooty so rash as to beg food from a stranger. A right good picking he'd get. Sometimes a chick will be attacked even in its own nest, for a sooty rarely misses a chance to take a sly dig at a neighbor's infant. And this brings us to one of Nature's queerest reactions—an instinct so cruel, useless, and harmful to the species that it seems impossible to explain. I mean the sooties' habit of viciously assaulting young birds not their own, as if such young were other adults, or noddies, or frigate-birds.

Young sooties going to and from their nests are constantly liable to be killed by brooding adults or by cross-grained old fowl that have no babies of their own. The attacks continue till the chicks reach their own nests or else sham death. Eight or ten adults will sometimes assault one baby and chase it a long distance. This starts innumerable fights among the adults.

"You hit my baby and I'll hit you!" is the battle-cry, and so they go at their feud hammer and tongs.

Hundreds of little chicks are mutilated and even picked to death by their own kinsfolk. You see these baby victims of Herodian rage scattered all over the island. The first week of life is highly critical. After that the infants learn to play dead, or else spryly to skedaddle out of range. Otherwise the death-toll would be thousands. Life at first is hard indeed for baby terns. How can science explain this absolutely anti-social and destructive instinct or reaction? The only possible answer seems to be that, inasmuch as chicks when attacked in their home nests invariably lie quiet, this furnishes some criterion for the old birds to begin recognizing their own young ones. But is this worth the loss of life involved? Let some scientist explain.

When the babes are less than a fortnight old the nests are gradually deserted. The chicks begin hopping up and down and flapping their little wings. "Come away!" the sea is calling, and they yearn to go. They fight more than ever. If they can't get other sooty chicks to scrap with, they begin attacking adult noddies—though never do they make the fatal mistake of pecking an adult sooty. Not twice, anyhow!

Flight begins, for both species, in about a month, with a series of unsteady, flying hops. From then on it's only a little while before the illimitable mystery of the sea lures them. And soon—their inherited complexes stimulated by sight of the leaping minnows—they take to the beach and become self-supporting.

"Good-by, Pa and Ma!"

"Time enough you were saying it!" Pa and Ma retort. "Time enough you big lazy lummoxes were turned out to take care of yourselves. We're worn down to shadows. Here's our blessing—and get out! *We're* going sunning and try to get fat for the big autumnal trek!"

"Trek, trek? What's a trek?" ask all the little terns, but the old ones only look wise and murmur:

"You'll know all about it when the time comes, just as from the very egg you've always known everything when the time came! Everything you'll ever need to know is all packed away in your nerves and brains—such as you have. So fly away now, and don't ever bother us again! *Adios!*"

What scientists call "the sunning reaction" begins soon after the eggs hatch, and strengthens as the young develop. With the lessening of family cares, all the

terns begin to frequent their club-house, the beach, for social enjoyment. "On the beach" doesn't mean, as with us, being down and out. No, among terns it signifies their happiest period of enjoyment. Sometimes undutiful married folk neglect their spouses, even in brooding-time, to loaf at this sandy, sun-baked club of theirs. Hither, too, come certain bachelors that for one reason or another have no family cares at all.

The noddies, though really gregarious, are punctilious as Spanish Dons, and seem stolidly indifferent to each other. You behold them silently sitting in rows, head to the wind, elaborately preening their feathers and pecking at their toes. They always keep a definite minimum distance from each other—the space they need in which to turn. Sometimes you find a dozen or more sitting thus, almost mathematically spaced, on the ridge-pole of the keeper's deserted house. Occasionally, when another noddy joins the group on the beach, they all indulge in elaborate bowing and scraping, which usually ends in a fight. It reminds you of the meeting of a peace society or a political convention.

The sooties, too, have their own sunning-place, inland from the noddies. There they likewise preen and stand about idly, like their cousins, talking domestic scandal and telling fish-stories.

Only the sooties indulge in active play. Far better fliers than the noddies, they often leave the island at morning and stay awing all day, not coming back till night. Their sport is a kind of racing, two birds darting side by side in crooked lines, or else soaring in circles so far aloft as to be lost in the glare of the tropical zenith. The sooties, if well fed, spend much of their time in such stunts. Their best flying feats rival

those of the pelican and the man-o'-war hawk. The noddies, more home-keeping birds, indulge in no such frivolity.

"If we *must* have amusement," they say, "we'll take ours fighting. Why waste perfectly good scrapping-power by trying to hang up speed or altitude records?"

Wonderful fighters, they. But when it comes to sheer, inexplicable achievement, the sooty's power of finding his nest by day or night, under all circumstances, takes the prize.

The island is, as you know, covered with infinitudes of shallow nests scooped in the sand. Armies of birds, presenting no difference to our dull eyes, brood infinitudes of eggs and chicks. Yet in all this vast multitude, every bird, without error or the slightest hesitation, locates its own nest so closely that thereafter the mate, by "chuckling" to it and being answered, brings it safe home.

Even if the mate is off the nest, the incoming bird always accurately finds its own place. What inexplicable force guides it ever to that tiny, indistinguishable spot on the sand? "Instinct," of course—but does that explain anything to our gross minds?

Dr. John B. Watson and Dr. K. S. Lashley, both of Johns Hopkins, also Dr. Paul Bartsch (already referred to) have exhaustively psychoanalyzed these long-suffering terns. These scientists have obliterated nests and then redug them in the same place. The man-made nests have been invariably accepted without question. The birds' paths, from lighting-place to nests, have been changed by removing overhanging obstacles, but the terns have always kept on ducking their heads

at the places where the obstacles once were, as though such obstacles were still present. With all the surroundings completely changed, the nests have been perfectly found. Big black cloths have been laid over the nests, and the eggs placed on these cloths, exactly in the original position. Inside of a minute the terns have contentedly brooded such eggs.

But if the nests are moved away laterally, only a few inches, the greatest disturbance always results. Any horizontal displacement utterly confuses the birds. They always cling to the old site, taking hours to re-adjust to a new. Hundreds of such experiments have been tried. In one strange test, however, after a tern had accepted a nest raised two feet high on the original site, the nest was carried to one side and elevated five feet. The bird returned, flew to the two-feet-high position and went through all the motions of lighting on the nest—that wasn't there! Five times it did this, each time dropping to the ground. Only then was the spell broken; only then did the bird abandon its dream-nest for the real one.

And the verdict of science? This—"that the secrets involved in the recognition of the nest, mate, and young must be grouped with many others in bird psychology as at present unsolved." Which is only a dignified way of saying: "We don't know anything about it!"

Who, for instance, understands the very powerful homing instinct in these birds? Why, if it's at all possible, do they always return? How and why do they invariably find their tiny, inhospitable island every spring? And the young ones, why do they always come back, when about eight months old, to this one spot?

Dr. Lombard told me: "Terns carried up to Key West always fly back here as fast as they can. Inside of a few hours they're on their nests again. Sooties taken north and liberated at Cape Hatteras, over territory wholly unknown to them, have been back in five days. The route they must have traveled, to keep with salt water, exceeded a thousand and eighty miles. Birds carried to Havana have hurried back in one day. Two released in the Gulf of Mexico, four hundred miles west of Bird Key, were back on the job in three days. Out of twenty-four birds carried to Galveston, thirteen returned, the rest having probably been eaten by hawks. But from New York no terns have ever succeeded in getting back home. As they must have jumping minnows for food, they have probably starved to death on the way. Even noddies and sooties can't do the impossible. But given any chance at all, they can 'home' for a thousand miles, over absolutely unknown territory."

What guides them? What kind of compass do they carry in their tiny brains or sensitive nerves? Who can ever know?

I have a theory that, to most animals and birds, life somewhat resembles our dreams. That their world is merely one of feelings which—apart from all reason—compel them to certain acts. Only the very strongest outside pressure can change those acts, as for example when the destruction of bushes on Sand Key forces many of the noddies to nest on bare sand. But such pressure must painfully confuse birds that show such fixed habits and compulsions. Who can explain why the mere feeling of even a fraudulent egg should change a bird's whole character? Who can unravel the mystery of even one small tern's life?

Scientists have liberally bedeviled these poor terns with bizarre experiments. Dr. Lombard described some of them, our last night at Tortugas, as we sat with pipes under the awnings of the *C. G. 181*, watching the diamond-dust of stars along warm, tropical horizons of mystery beyond Bird Key.

"A few years ago," said he, "Dr. Watson painted some of the birds red and blue and other fancy colors. At first this frescoing produced a most terrific uproar. The decorated birds' own mates attacked and drove them away. Hundreds of hostile beaks assaulted them. They couldn't light anywhere on the island and were driven clear off it. Next day, though, peace had been restored. The mates accepted their gaudy spouses, and the rainbow birds were back home, dutifully brooding. After all, what's a little crimson or any other colored make-up, in either bird or human family life?

"When it comes to coloring their eggs, noddies and sooties show a great difference," the doctor went on. "Noddies'll take them, any old color, or take sooties' eggs, or fake ones, or what have you? But sooties are more discriminating. Vermilion eggs strike them as suspicious and are pushed out of the nest. In one case of a vermilion egg the sooty dug another nest and made nearly a hundred trips between the new nest and the old before it finally accepted the old one and the giddy egg. Other colors they sometimes accept, sometimes reject. They'll walk around colored eggs, roll them out of the nest, push them back again, and usually brood them after a while."

And by the way, isn't it odd about science? When boys paint eggs or birds, or put paper boots on Pussy, or tie a tomato-can to Fido's tail, it's usually called

mischief. And yet aren't the boys truly experimenting? Don't they want to see "what specific reactions occur in the physical and psychic fields"? Certainly they do! None the less, they usually get walloped for it.

But you take professors and biologists and psychoanalysts, and when they paint sea-birds like barbers' poles, dye their eggs with Easter hues, set their nests up on sticks, and give them rubber minnows to eat, it's—well, anyhow, instead of a licking the professors get a Ph.D. for it.

Isn't life strange?

And isn't the urge amazingly strange that, about the first of each September, sweeps Bird Key clean of all but a few crippled old warrior terns that, unable to fly, remain sadly deserted? Local stories tell how the adult birds start first on their mysterious, unknown southern flight, leaving all the young, and how an enormous pilot-bird always comes to guide them to some far-off winter goal. But fiction must yield to fact. Old and young all leave together. Some autumnal morning finds Bird Key deserted, its nests abandoned, its frantic tumult quelled, its swarming schools of minnows leaping without peril from above.

Vacant under the blazing sun lies Bird Key, and vacant it must remain till with another springtime, lo! back again the myriad, eager terns come swarming.

Thus forever ebbs and flows the miracle of life down in the far Tortugas. A miracle, indeed!

But in the world of Nature, who can show anything that isn't just a miracle? Not I, good sirs; not I!

IX

THE GRAVEYARD OF THE ATLANTIC

Sable Island, Death-trap of Unnumbered Ships and Lives

THE anchor chain roared down, the Canadian Government supply steamer *Lady Laurier* swung to her hook; and so, after three days' groping through blind fogs, there we were at Sable Island, the destroyer. The wickedest island in the world, it has for centuries taken heavy toll of the ocean's best in ships and men.

All tawny and olive, I saw it, stretched in an immense crescent of twenty-two miles right across our bows. A strange sight, through the lifting fog, to come upon out there 180 miles east of Halifax, in full Atlantic! Just a heap of sand, treeless, ominous, forlorn. But there hundreds of ships have gone to Davy Jones's locker with losses of life and treasure incalculable.

Aboard and on shore keen activity tautened every nerve. For this was boat-day, the big quarterly event.

"Lots doing," said Captain Travis. "Nobody'll go to bed this night till two or three. Every minute counts now!"

So it did. Fair weather bade all hands work swiftly while they could. In an hour some shift of wind might lash up such mad tempests of surf as to make approach



White Land drifts everywhere, like snow.



The Super's house at Sable Island.



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A melancholy corner of Davy Jones's locker.



© *Underwood & Underwood*

The lifeboat must go till capsized three times.

suicidal. Once the *Laurier* tried in vain for seventeen days to land supplies. Occasionally not one "civil" hour will come in a month. So every calm moment is golden for the fifty people of the life-saving establishment, the island's only population.

Winches clattered, boats swung down, tarpaulins whisked from pens where bewildered cattle bellowed. Then the ship's launch took the water; and even as an island life-boat came cresting out to us, unloading began.

"Sable's dangerous because she lays so close to the sea, without no high land," a steward told me. "Ships sail right on her without suspectin' trouble, 'specially in a fog. And currents run all ways round her, buildin' up new shoals. Them currents often sets ships far off their course. Funny, but wreckage or bodies on one side o' the island most generally comes ashore on the other. A hard place, mister!"

The bars make it perilous indeed. They stretch out so far beyond the ends of the island that vessels have come to grief twenty miles from any visible land. The total danger-line exceeds fifty miles. Hardly a rod of all that distance but has gulped down ships and men. A monstrous maw, that! Among its ship-swallowing exploits have been the destruction of the racing schooners *Esperanto*, in 1921; the *Marshal Foch* and *Puritan*, in 1922. Some may remember, also, that the famous *Valkyrie* died there in 1893. But no more, now, of wrecks. We shall soon see wrecks enough, I warrant you.

"Take a long jump, sir!" a sailor bade me. I smashed down on coal-bags in a boat. Black dust flew.

Oil barrels dangled. An agitated bull in a crate belowered as he swayed down. Then the launch picked up a long line of overladen boats and away we lifted, shoreward.

Bronzed and clear-eyed stalwarts were the islanders in the outcoming life-boat—good specimens of Sable folk. The Canadian Government maintains them all, with a grant also from England of £400 a year. There are two light-keepers, four life-saving-station-keepers, three Marconi men, and a squad of patrolmen and surfmen, all under a superintendent. Their equipment is the last word in efficiency: self-baling life-boats, Lyle guns, breeches-buoys and rockets, life cars and mortars. Nothing in the way of apparatus is lacking at Sable.

As we surged shoreward, very far to east and west dim lighthouses were visible; a wireless mast; and nearer, among ragged dunes, buildings of the main station. Tiny figures crept along the beach, horsemen galloped, carts churned the sand. Inquiring seals bobbed, regarding us with eyes of wonder. The launch cast us free. Seamen bent immense oar blades. With a mighty heave and roll we struck the sand.

Amid babels of greeting, out the men tumbled knee-deep in swooping brine. Sailors with sinewed arms carried the women passengers ashore. I scrambled for it and made land.

Jumbled impressions crowded—a tremendous beach backed by grass-topped sand hills; shaggy-maned ponies hauling wagons with broad, sand-defying tires; the bull being dragged and driven to lunge into the surf; islanders in oilskins and rubber boots unloading huge bags of coal. Very far up the beach they toiled

with those bags; for only last year a ship landed fifty tons, and during the night a bit of wind came on. By morning every lump had vanished. A hungry sea forever gnaws at Sable.

We labored up a breach in the dunes. Hard going, for the fine sand mounts ankle-deep. Sable Island sand creaks like frozen snow. The ghosts of buried sea-rovers seem protesting the tread of living folk.

Passing storehouses built of ships' timbers, we glimpsed a life-boat buried so deep that only the scull, or steering iron, still projected. That shattered boat has lain there only a little while.

"But the sand swallows everythin' up, here," an islander told me. "That's why we can't keep real count o' the lives lost. Once the sand ketches bodies, they soon sink down, same as ships do. On the south side you can still see the ribs o' the *Amelia*, wrecked twenty-five years ago, and the bones o' the *Ada Yorke*, that struck in eighteen sixty-six, but 'most everything else has gone under. The *Foch* was all swallowed up in no time. All we got out o' her was a few pounds o' butter. An' the *Puritan* hit in a heavy blow. We only see her once afore she disappeared. She must ha' gone into a hole on the west bar."

A sweltering glare half-blinded us. Sand, sand, everywhere sand. A Sahara in the sea! Over the dune crest, along a vague road skirted by wreck-timber fences, I found proof of the island's prowess as a killer. For there the rocket-house, through wide doors, showed far more than life-boats and apparatus. There old ships' lanterns and fittings were eloquent; and so were name-boards and life-belts in profusion—mute testimony of sea tragedies beyond all telling.

Faded and worn, storm-gnawed and sometimes nearly obliterated, there you find boards inscribed with ships' names—a kind of marine cemetery. You read *Olympia*, *Lord Bury*, *Golden Bow*, *Voorburg*, *Stella Maris*, and scores of others.

Among the steamers that have died on Sable have been the *Eric*, *Barbadoes*, *Georgia*, *Ephesus*, *Amsterdam*, *State of Virginia*, *Nerito*, *Moravia*, *Heimdale*, and *Silverwings*. Famous sailing-vessels lost there have included the British war brig *Harriett*, *Crofton Hall*, *Stark Odder*, *Ironsides*, *Marshal Wellington*, *Malakoff*, *Neptune*, and *Gondolier*. There on life-belts you see *Apache*, *Skidby*, *Belgian King*, with many more.

Suddenly your glance falls on a belt where dim letters half reveal *La Bourgogne*, Havre. If that belt could only speak!

Ships have been wrecked and men have died in Sable's mad waters ever since history makes any mention of the island; which is away back in the mists of the sixteenth century. As early as 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed from Newfoundland in the *Golden Hind*, intending to go thither "upon intelligence we had that the Portugals above thirty years past did put into the Island neat and swine . . . which were since then exceedingly multiplied."

That voyage cost gallant Sir Humphrey his life. Men have met their end in various ways there; but none more dramatically than Sir Humphrey when he went down crying in an exceedingly loud voice: "Heaven is as near by sea as by land!" One can imagine him in pourpoint and lace ruffs, on his high-galleried quarterdeck, declaiming at the elements—

then perishing quite in the grand manner, as befitted a doughty old Elizabethan mariner.

De Laet's "Novus Orbis," in 1633, declares: "Furthermore, the Isle of Sabla hath a bad repute for shipwreckes." That same year a Boston mariner named John Rose was wrecked there and had to stay more than three months. He reported nearly a thousand head of cattle and many black foxes; but when he later returned to get them, he found certain Acadians had beaten him to it. His opinion of the Frenchmen was far from polite.

But dinner was awaiting us at the superintendent's house, across a real hay-field, small and sandy, yet boasting grass, wild peas, and yarrow. Behind the dunes you find a little peaty soil, only an inch or two thick, yet able to grow grass and maintain the islanders' gardens. Children and cranberries, however, are the island's best crops. Some years Sable exports fifty barrels of cranberries; and as for children, half the population consists of youngsters. Healthy ones too; none finer.

"And what do you find to do, here?" I asked an islander who trudged with me toward the super's.

"Oh, plenty. Even where there's no wrecks, we're always jiggin' at somethin'. There's haymakin', and then the cranberries to pick; boat-buildin' and repairs of wagons and apparatus all the time. We get up driftwood, and sometimes, when we're short of coal, screen it out of the sand. Then we have the cattle to look after, ponies to break—we've got fifty tame ones now—life-boat drill, and drill in all kinds of methods of drownin'."

One wireless-man is always on duty. Just to show the value of this service, only four steamers, four schooners, and a bark have struck on Sable since 1910, when the service was established.

The superintendent, Harold F. Henry, sharply questioned me. He has absolute authority. One of the island rules is that no one shall land or remain without permission. So he had to find out all about me. Who was I, and why? No stranger can walk these sands without giving a full and satisfactory account of himself.

Our talk at dinner, of course, turned on wrecks and tempests. For these are Sable's business. Other shores are amateur wreck-makers. Sable Island is a "pro." Storms strike there with amazing swiftness. Many a day the sun will rise clear, and save for the sea breaking high on the bars no sign of tempest will be visible. But of a sudden the sun fades behind a leaden haze, clouds flock up, and wind-swirls begin to fling the sand about. Darkness falls, with a low-driving scud. The gale bursts, slashing off the sand-hummocks and filling the air with deluges of blinding sand. Rain falls by tons; lightning crackles; leaping surfs join with thunder to drown every voice. Such ravings of an infuriated ocean are seen nowhere else than in shoal waters like those about Sable. The whole Atlantic hurls itself on the island, as if with wind and tumbled "gray-backs" to sweep houses, people, and all into the mad sea.

"Yes, sir, we have some pretty fierce tempests here at the edge o' the Gulf Stream and the Banks," a weather-bitten guard affirmed. "I've seen the sea breakin' twenty-five foot high. The bars are worse'n

the beach, for there's a chance of savin' men on the beach. But if a ship hits the bars, there mostly ain't. Them bars shoal off to two hundred fathom, so after a ship strikes and drives over, she's liable to founder with all hands. Times, we find a little wreckage or some bodies ashore—and that's all the sign we ever get that a ship's hit one o' the bars."

"One wreck sometimes makes another," added a second. "I guess some vessels has hit the old b'ilers of the *Skidby*, that's still on the bottom off the new station. And I believe the *Esperanto* struck the machinery of the old *State of Virginia* at the west end. Them engines must ha' caught the *Esperanto* as she was racin' acrost what looked like clear water, and ripped her from stem to stern."

"We see some pretty hard sights," declared the first. "When the *Puritan* was wrecked, her cap'n, Johansen, come ashore a whole month later. There wasn't much to him but a skiliton, exceptin' for his feet. I mind one time three Frenchmen come ashore in a dory. They'd got lost on the Banks. 'Leven days without grub or water. They couldn't shut their mouths, an' their tongues was all black. We had to split their boots to get 'em off."

"Yes, and that American shacker too," put in another. "A shacker is one man alone in a dory. Fred Wilson, his name was, from the fishin' schooner *Commonwealth*. He was lost six days and nights, with nary bite nor sup. Rowed and drifted ninety mile, sir; and what's more, saved all his trawl. He made Sable in a nor'west gale. We put out through very bold water and got him. His tongue was black as your boot, sir, and stuck 'way out. He couldn't walk. We had to carry

him and lay him in the grass. We figgered he was going to die, but he didn't."

"But I mind one as did," said the first. "He come ashore off a wreck we never see. Got as far as the Sailors' Home, opened his mouth to speak, an' dropped dead. We never knowed who he was, nor nothin', poor cuss!"

A few years ago one of the patrolmen found a fisherman's boot. He shook it, and bones from two human toes fell out. Search in the breakers revealed three bodies. A dory later came to land—mute testimony of some sea tragedy unknown. Some winters past, a man and a boy who had strayed from their fishing-vessel in a fog managed to make Sable. The boy survived, but the man died. Both were French.

"Remember that great wreck o' the Italian bark *Rafaele*?" asked a surfman. "That was in ninety-six. She come ashore in a ninety-mile gale. We heard her distress gun, and 'twas all hands out! We wasn't long gettin' the boats and the guns hitched up. 'Twas some run we made, with five ponies on each boat, down the beach!

"The crew was in the riggin', and the bark was breakin' up fast, with a most tremendous sea smashin' over her; shootin' up higher'n the masthead. We fired a breeches-line over. Saved all hands, mister, but the last man hadn't hardly got ashore when she busted in two an' went down. A close call, that!"

The list of ships lost on Sable reads like Lloyd's Register. Old seafaring men will recall that a number of the famous clippers died there, such as the *Union*, *Packet*, and *Hannah and Eliza*. A very curious incident was that of the bark *Myrtle*, which in 1840 went

ashore, was abandoned, and during a heavy gale got clear of the sands. Without a soul on board she drifted all the way to Fayal in the Azores! This is one of very few instances of a ship ever escaping, once she had struck the island. Only seven in all have ever touched Sable and lived to brag of it.

A good, soul-satisfying wreck was the *Princess Amelia*, from London, in 1797. Some provisions were saved, and all hands lived for two winter months in a hut, till Wyatt, her captain, and a few others decked a longboat with canvas and after perils managed to reach the mainland for help.

Another first-class disaster was the loss, some years later, of the *Francis*, with the immensely valuable equipage of the Duke of Kent. Every soul perished, first or last; and rich furniture and plate strewed the beaches. But not for long. Wreckers and pirates of the most low-browed description in those days made the island a rendezvous; and these hard-bitten birds soon swooped down to garner loot from the royal wreckage. Presently jewels and rare articles appeared in fishermen's cabins on the Nova Scotia coast. Stories were whispered, too, of grim murder—of gently bred folk from the ill-fated ship reaching Sable alive, only to have their throats cut.

What stories, if those impassive sands could tell!

Whales have twice stranded on Sable, and the islanders have varied their occupations by "blubbering." In the early days, messages were sometimes sent to the main by kites or carrier-pigeons. One pigeon gave news of a wreck that otherwise couldn't have been known on shore for two months. The islanders suffered a

severe loss in 1870 when their supply schooner *Ocean Traveller* left Sable with some of them aboard and was never afterward heard of.

"Then there was the *Platea*, a Greek steamer," an islander narrated. "There's a story in *that*, mister! She struck in nineteen nineteen, an' run her bow right square up into the grass. Happened to be a long spell o' good weather, an' she didn't break up. Salvage men come out and putt nine anchors astern, with blocks an' tayckles on 'em. Some o' the anchors was half a mile offshore. Her engines would still run. There come a gale from t'other side o' the island an' raised the water. The engines was worked, to make the propeller drive away the sand astern. The salvage men worked winches on the tayckles, hauled her back a thousand yards, an' I'm dogged if she didn't slide clear. All she left here was Greek rabbits. Sixteen days o' hard work, sir, but saved the ship—one o' the very few as ever got away, once they touched Sable."

The *Platea's* Greek rabbits remind me that some extraordinary biological complications sometimes result on Sable. The first time rabbits were ever brought to the island, half a century ago, rats from wrecks found young rabbit-meat agreeable. As fast as the rabbits multiplied, which was very fast indeed, the rats kept pace with them; and what's more, these new swarms of rats ate up most of the islanders' stores. Besides which, rabbit-burrows began to appear everywhere; and a rabbit-burrow isn't pleasant for a pony to step into when galloping to a wreck on a black night of tempest.

"Cats!" ordered the islanders. So cats were sent. The cats first killed the rats and then almost com-

pletely finished the rabbits. And *they* increased so much and grew so wild as to become a pest; and then the cry was: "Dogs!" Dogs and shotguns finished the pussies; and a few left-over rabbits got busy again. Presently the island was once more freely rabbitied.

About that time a snowy owl happened to drop in and found himself in a kind of rabbitry paradise. After filling up, he flew away to invite all his friends and relations to dinner. Pretty soon flocks of owls began to appear, and once more the rabbits lost out. But there are still rats enough. A biologist would enjoy studying the interplay of vital forces in such a limited territory. Strange too are the human reactions. Is there not a fascination about a group of people clinging to a doomed spot, holding an untenable position in face of natural forces bound sometime to defeat them? The Sable Islanders are doing just that.

For doomed the island certainly is. A patrolman gave me some facts:

"Sable used to be two hundred miles long and five wide, and there's people livin' that remember when it was ten miles longer'n it is now. West Light has been moved back already three times. The last time was only October gone, and now there's heavy surf over where it stood then. It cost forty thousand dollars and we nigh-hand to lost it. When the first Main Station was built 'twas a good five mile from the end o' the island, sheltered by big hills. In four year, four mile o' land went. So they took the station back three mile.

"After a while they moved it again, to Haul-Over Pond. Pretty soon the sea come to within half a mile of it, and they moved the buildings four mile east;

and 'twasn't long before we had to move it to where it is now.

"Some day the ocean'll break through into Wallace's Lake, and this whole end'll be in two pieces, and soon go. She's goin' at the east end too. There's a long strip of sand out there we call The Weeds, with a kind of flowers on it, maybe two foot high. We used to have a rescue hut out there on a hummock, with matches and grub hung up in a bag away from the rats, and directions how to get to the East Light. 'Bout a year ago, sir, a storm took off a mile of that strip, and then the house and all went. So that shows you!"

The whole island seems to be shifting, moving east as the prevailing winds drive the sand that way. The bars are growing longer in places, and shallower, more perilous to ships. Some vessels have been wrecked on them as far as sixteen miles from the East Light. No planting of vegetation can arrest this process. Old Atlantic has marked the island for her own and means to have it, soon or late. Even in calm weather the heavy ground-swell is always nibbling, gnawing; and in a heavy storm immense masses sometimes slide into the sea. Islanders will tell you:

"Another fifty years and there may not be any Sable Island—and then God help any ship as hits the bars!"

Dinner ended before the life-savers had narrated half the wrecks and queer stories they knew, and out we visitors wandered to inspect the most deadly of islands. Look where one will, some glimpse of the sleeping monster, Atlantic, meets the eye; for at its widest, Sable measures hardly a mile. And steadily

booming, the roar of surfs on either shore companions every thought or word.

Ocean is there the one big fact. Even the buildings have a trim nautical tang, with ships' fittings and furniture. Near the super's house I found a perfect lady. Very much of a lady she was, portly enough and to spare, gazing with painted smile up into the sky. She, too, could tell a story if she would, this carefully repaired figurehead. No one now remembers what tall ship she once led onward through stormy seas, only at long last to end her days on Sable.

Farther stood a patrolmen's house, where dwell seven bachelors and a cook. Only married men have the outside stations, with the comforts of a garden and chickens; so marriageable girls are at a premium. Up a high dune—where three wild ponies fled with streaming manes and tails—I reached one of the lookout towers. Its lofty platform afforded magnificent views of the Atlantic; feather-white surfs tumbling over the bars; all the vast curve of the island, wild and forbidding. Herds of untamed ponies browsed over the scantily grassed hillocks or among the pools, some fresh, others salt. Telephone-lines strode away, connecting all stations, so that when a wreck is sighted the island's full man-power and apparatus can be assembled.

Briny perfumes wafted from surging beaches. Olive and cream-yellow tints prevailed, with snowy surf-collars all about—a subdued yet appealing color-scheme. A pale, wistful, melancholy place, far from the world's moil; a strange place wherein to live one's life away! Said Gregoire, a young islander:

"I've been here fifteen years, sir. Came here when

I was only five. No, sir, I never remember seeing a tree or a locomotive, movie or auto. I never saw the inside of a school-house, either. The old folks teach the young uns to read and write. I've been studyin' wireless, and I can operate pretty good. If I could only get over to the mainland and take my exams I know I could get a license!"

Such is young Gregoire's ambition. Can it ever be realized?

"Yes, sir, I'm a patrolman," he went on, while I admired his clear blue eyes and golden tan. "Each of us has thirty-six miles a day to cover, on pony-back, in thick or stormy weather. Clear days we just take observations from the towers. Every beach and bar has to be covered twice a day and reported on. Fair weather it's not so bad. But you take it in a winter gale or a sand-storm and it's about all a man or a pony can do to face that. 'Specially as we have to get away from our stations before daylight on the morning patrol, and can't come in till after dark on the afternoon one. Sand-storms are the worst, sir."

The islanders dread these more than blizzards. Nothing can restrain that sleety, cutting drift. The gale-shot sand etches window-glass and sometimes eats holes clear through it. Sand filters into every chink, piling up gray drifts inside the houses and getting into food. Of windy mornings the islanders have to shovel it away from their doors. Not even the works of a double-cased watch escape the sand.

The Canadian Government once set out eighty-four thousand young pines to hold the sand, but ere long the wind blew them all out. Despite shelter-fences, sand buries buildings up to the eaves. It wears all the

bristles off the tops of pigs' snouts, if let out to root in it, and gives them a high polish. But few pigs are allowed to run at large, because they may eat drowned folk washed ashore. Sheep and cattle die from sand in their grass.

"Eleven cows died one year," explained young Gregoire. "The ponies are wise and eat only the tops o' the grass, but the cows eat it all, and that finishes 'em. Every little while we have to drag 'em off to Monkey Puzzle and bury 'em."

Monkey Puzzle is Sable's animal cemetery. Odd name—but, then, odd island! The islanders, however, are passionately attached to it. Cut off from the world as they are, they look upon this desolate, treeless strip of storm-bound, fog-shrouded sand far out in the Atlantic as their home. Few ever leave it.

"Superintendent Boutilier stayed here nigh thirty years," continued Gregoire. "Chief Cox'n Naugle's wife has been here thirty. She come here when she was a baby. Naugle's been here twenty-two. Lots of us, even as could, don't care to visit the main once in five years. Maurice Noonan, 'the father of Sable Island,' stayed fifty. He helped bury more'n twenty drowned folks.

"When he was sixty-four, he thought he'd retire, but he couldn't stand it and had to come back. He saw nigh fifty ships come ashore, and helped save hundreds o' people. Once he saved the crews of two ships twenty-five miles apart, both in a single day. That was going some!"

The heaviest hardship at Sable—strange to say—is lack of reading matter. The islanders read every book and magazine to tatters. If you have any to spare, for

heaven's sake send them to Sable Island, care of S. S. *Lady Laurier*, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Every page will be a life-saver to the life-savers far out on that unspeakably barren death-trap of the Atlantic.

Physical starvation as well as mental has not been wholly unknown, when supply vessels have failed to reach the island and when seals have migrated elsewhere. On one occasion the schooner *Elizabeth*, which was to have revictualled the place, lost three men trying to land. Only two were left on board. These had to sail away, could not even get back to Halifax, and eventually wound up at Antigua, West Indies, "after many dangers and privations." More than once the islanders have been on the point of starvation and have had to kill and eat ponies.

"We had sixteen people to maintain all winter," says an old report, "which made our provisions run very short. We have not had a bit of bread this long time, and ate up all our turnips and potatoes. We are in a starving condition. The boat made two attempts to reach the mainland, but was obliged to return. We hope the ponies will make good venison."

At the time of my visit, one of the men told me that they had even then been forced to kill nearly all their animals except the milch-cows.

"We've been down to bread and crackers and molasses three times a day for the last three weeks," he said. "We don't mind the work, if we get somethin' to eat, but it comes hard on an empty stomach. Fall afore last we smoked tea and coffee for a month. Didn't have a dust of tobacco. We was scrapin' the flour-barr'ls, too. From the sixth of August to the seventeenth of December, one year, no ship come, and

there wasn't a pipe of tobacco on the whole island for over a month."

But that, too, seems all in the job.

Another day I visited the Sailors' Home, where shipwrecked crews are kept till taken off. The crew of the *Esperanto* was one of the last to be thus accommodated. Now that the *Lady Laurier* makes four trips a year, refugees never have to stay very long. But in the old pre-wireless days, and when a schooner made only two uncertain calls at Sable every year, ship-broken men sometimes had to stay five or six months, willy-nilly.

The home contains twenty-four bunks for such, every bunk inscribed with names of unfortunate men and ships. Sometimes the island has had to make room for as many as two hundred castaways. Space was at a premium and belts had to be tightened, but somehow or other everybody managed to live through the "jam."

You might think men snatched from old Atlantic's maw would forever be grateful. Alas! for human ingratitude. Some years ago, under Superintendent McKenna, a wrecked captain undertook to make his men mutiny. He tried to shoot the super, who saved himself only by keeping all firearms out of the captain's reach till a relief ship bore the ingrate away. Another time sixteen shipwrecked men really did mutiny, refused to work, kicked about their rations, demanded liquor, and made the direst threats. One even tried to cut down an islander with an ax. The island folk frowned on this as bad etiquette and quelled the mutineers in good old two-fisted fashion, after which

blue-jackets came and bore the rebels off to prison at Halifax.

Since those days strong waters have been absolutely taboo on Sable. More than one convivial soul has been sent there from the main, to take an enforced cure. "Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink!" applies with peculiar force on this most peculiar of islands.

Beyond the Sailors' Home lies Wallace's Lake, half a mile wide and eight long—some lake, for a sand-bar in the ocean! An islander went with me in a dory across this singular body of water. The south shore is a long, narrow desert of sand, marked only by seals' flipper-tracks, hoof-prints of ponies, and weather-bleached bones of wrecks. Against it I saw driving formidable bombardments of surf. For there thousands of Atlantic miles hurl themselves full-drive against the island. Sometimes at night, on Sable, surfs like that blaze with phosphorescence; immense, cold flames leap fifteen or twenty feet in air. The heavy malice of such breakers and their resistless undertow doom any vessel caught there.

Almost at the very spot on the south shore that I visited, the *Marshal Foch* met death. So did the *Adelphi*, *Jane Lovitt*, *Gustave*, and many more. But the most famous wreck there was the old French frigate *L'Africaine*, in 1822. The islanders saved every one of her two hundred men in a shrieking tempest, going out for them with life-boats after all the frigate's own boats had been stove. For that, Louis XVIII struck a medal in their honor and sent them a big silver cup brimmed with gold coins. Next year the *Marshal Wellington* was hurled ashore, with 229 souls

aboard, not one of whom would ever have survived had it not been for the islanders. There's stuff enough at Sable for hero-tales by the dozen! But where to start?

Along the beaches and in the lake you are kept under constant watch by very tame and inquisitive seals. For Sable is a breeding and basking place for immense "pods" of these animals, all government-protected like the millions of sea-fowl that at various seasons swarm there. Walrus herds, once abundant, have all been exterminated. So would the seals have been, too, if the Government hadn't interfered. About fifteen years ago an enterprising Halifax firm got a concession to kill some. They did just that—killed *some*, to the extent of 250,000 head. So the Government revoked the concession and since then the seals have lived in peace, almost as tame as dogs.

Midway of those desolate barrens we found a little wooden box nailed to a telephone-pole. Our guide took a ticket from the box.

"A patrolman's ticket," he explained. "Each man leaves a ticket at the end of his beat, and the next man takes it, and so it goes all round the island to the super. Good idea, ain't it?"

And as we recrossed the lake: "Here's where two American schooners were lost awhile back."

"The surf dashed them over here into the lake?" I queried.

"No, sir, though sometimes the surf'll beat clear acrost, right up to the super's back door. But the time I mean, a storm opened up the lake, and a couple of Americans run in here for refuge. Next night the sand all closed up again, and there they was, trapped.

They never got out, neither. You could see the bones of 'em a long time, till the sand swallowed 'em."

After supper we drifted over to the patrolmen's quarters, for stories were in order; especially ghost stories. If ghosts should walk anywhere on earth, they should on Sable!

"There's a place here called the French Gardens," asserted a tall, soft-spoken life-guard, lighting his pipe. "It's all inclosed with sods, and it ain't a healthy place to get near at night. Talk about your ghosts!"

This sounded encouraging. The French Gardens, I knew, were made by sixty convicts marooned about 1690 by the Marquis de la Roche. Left there for five years, they built shanties with wreck timbers, lived on seals and wild ponies and berries, fought and killed each other. A dark chapter, indeed. When France rescued them, only eleven were left alive after horrors, violence, and misery indescribable. They were brought back and presented to the king, as ancient records tell, "Cloathed from head to foote in shaggy skins & their hayre of prodigious length." Tradition lives on.

"And if you walk nigh the French Gardens at night," the life-guard affirmed, "and whistle 'The Marseillaise,' they'll come up, the dead uns will. It ain't a very pleasant sight on a dark night, now I'm tellin' you!"

"There's another French ghost on here too," added a second patrolman. "He's a Paris gentleman as always complains to wrecked Frenchmen about Henry Somethin', for banishin' his wife with that bunch o' convicks. He walks round the life-boat shed on the

twenty-third o' May, in old-fashioned boots with silver buckles."

"Then there's the ghost of one o' the judges that executed Charles the First," says another, a ruddy and thin-faced man with muscular bare arms. "After that judge escaped from England, he hid here a long time an' died here. The twenty-ninth of every May he marches round, singin' psalm-tunes through his nose, and you can hear him above any hurricane as ever blowed!"

"I never seen him," remarked the soft-spoken life-guard, "but I know there's a tall ghost with new oil-skins on, you'll meet now and again. Also a lady without arms, as walks every Fourth o' July."

"Don't know nothin' about *that*," said a sturdy islander, from the hard blue bench along the wall, "but there's an old man that always rows in Number Four life-boat, nights. He ain't none of our island folk. Always pulls bow oar, he do. He comes mysterious and goes the same."

"Shaaah! That's all bunk!" Chief Coxswain Naugle rebutted. "I been in that boat a hundred times an' never see him!"

"Mebbe not, but you can't deny the Smoky Hut lady!"

The Smoky Hut lady seemed well known by all hands. Smoky Hut is the site of an ancient castaways' encampment, where the island's most famous visitant usually hangs out.

"She must ha' been a passenger on the old troop-ship *Princess Amelia*, as was wrecked here four years afore there was any life-savin' establishment," explained a staff man, squinting through his smoke.

"That was a mighty rich ship, mind you, with lashin's of money aboard, an' plate an' jewels belongin' to the queen's father, Prince Edward. There was about two hundred souls aboard, an' most of 'em drowned. But some got ashore an' built a hut, an' tried to winter on what grub an' stuff they could salvage.

"Them times, there was pirates enough an' then some, round the island. I cackelate them pirates must ha' murdered some o' the survivors. The way I've heard it, a Cap'n Torrens was sent to rescue 'em, but he got wrecked here too. An' one day at Smoky Hut he was surprised to see a dog he didn't know was on the island at all, an' this here dog was almighty scairt, and barkin' wild. First thing the cap'n see when he went in the hut was a lady settin' there with long wet hair hangin' down her back, an' her clothes all wet an' covered with sand, like she'd just come out o' the sea.

" 'Good heavens, ma'am,' says the cap'n. 'Who're you, an' where'd you come from?'

"She didn't say a word but only held up her left hand, an' he see one o' the fingers was cut off. Well, he's just goin' to bandage it up for her, when she slips out of the door an' runs. He after her, shoutin' for her to stop, but she won't. An' he can't overhaul her, no-how."

"You never can, a ghost," grumbled some one. "They got all speed-records busted a mile."

"No livin' woman never run so fast as that un! She runs to the lake an' into it; an' where she goes to, then, blowed if the cap'n can tell.

"When he cruises back to the hut, though, there she is again, still holdin' up her hand with the finger cut

off. An' by that he reckonizes her as a Mrs. Copeland he used to know.

"'Is that you, Mrs. Copeland?' says he. She nods an' shows him her hand again. 'Murdered by pirates for your ring, an' the finger cut off, to get it! Well, ma'am,' he says, 'I'll get revenged on 'em for you. I'll track 'em out till they're shot or hung, s'help me!'

"She nods again, an' then up-anchor an' away she goes. An' he—knowin' it's a ghost—don't try to fol-
ler. It ain't wise, y'know, to foller ghosts."

"And what happened then?" asked I, the alien.

"Oh, Cap'n Torrens got on track o' the pirates, an' found the ring an' sent it back to the murdered lady's friends. But as for them there pirates, he never did catch 'em. So the poor lady, she's still walkin' the sands o' Sable Island, holdin' up her hand, callin' for revenge. There's times o' year when you're almost bound to see her, round Smoky Hut."

Long silence followed. At last:

"I don't b'lieve a doggone word of it!" grunted a patrolman. "You can't tell *me* there's ghosts an' such!"

No one answered. Only the long surf against the death-strewn island beaches roared and receded, charged and boomingly thundered again upon the desolate sands where secrets lie that never can be told.

Ghosts there may or may not be, but buried treasure is very much of a reality on Sable Island. The place, if properly worked, would be a gold mine. Only Davy Jones's bookkeeper knows what values lie hidden there. In addition to loot buried by old-time pirates, rich treasures must at various times have been cast upon these treacherous bars and beaches. Every little

while ancient coins are exposed by the shifting sands. Even while I was there, East Light-Keeper Gregoire's little daughter picked up a big Spanish coin of the long ago, sand-polished like new.

If Americans lived there, they would go to excavating forthwith, but the islanders pay little heed. Trivialities like Spanish doubloons fail to raise their pulses. Nor do they care at all that stupendous wealth certainly lies hidden in their domain.

A load of lumber coming ashore is more valuable to the islanders than much gold. The sea plays strange pranks. When the *Esperanto* was wrecked, her deck-engine washed ashore and was welcomed as a great find. But before the islanders could secure it, the surf carried it away again and it was lost. Some surf, to juggle steam-engines!

"Money? We don't need money here, sir!" Chief Coxswain Naugle one day affirmed to me. "Lord love you, no! What'd we do with money? There's no store, nothin' to buy, no movies, booze, or autos—no way to spend a copper. That is, unless we play poker. One man I know went two year an' never see a red cent. Money's the least of our worries, sir!"

Sable Island is the only place I know where money seems to have no value. The men's pay of about a dollar a day is mostly drawn by relations on shore. The islanders' compelling motive is service, duty; not cash. Being so far from the world, they dodge not only all money evils—including politics—but also nearly all sickness. They've never had any epidemic but measles.

"We're rich," said Naugle, swinging his rubber boot against an empty oil barrel and gazing seaward with clear gray eyes. A typical islander he, with strong

brown hands and bronzed face. Dungarees and an old straw hat gave him a picturesque touch. "We don't need money; nor medals neither. If some of our fellows did half the rescues, on the main, they do here, they'd be round-shouldered carryin' their medals!"

But, by way of exception, one islander some years ago let money lure him from Sable. He got that money oddly, too.

"He was a cook here," Naugle told me, "gettin' a hundred and seventy-five dollars a year. Well, one day on the nor'east dry bar, he claims he found a bunch o' men, like pirates, sittin' on the sand. They had a power o' money—he said—an' though they might ha' killed him, they didn't. They give him a big whack of it. I think myself he just found it. Anyhow, he took it an' shared up fifty-fifty with the Gover'nment, an' started in the real-estate business in Halifax, an' got mighty rich.

"Another of our men, too, picked up a package one day on the beach, all water-soaked. He didn't think much of it, but just took it home an' put it up on a beam to dry, an' forgot about it. Later, he opened it, an' what d'you think, sir? 'Twas a big lot of Bank of England notes, good as gold. Buried treasure here? I *guess* there is!"

Peculiar things often come to light, and grim ones too. The moving sands are continually revealing unsolved mysteries. Not very long ago, at Number Three Station, one of the life-guards picked up a scabbard mounted with gold. Only traces of the sword-belt remained. The sword-handle was still whole, but rust had long since eaten away the blade. About a week before my visit an old Napoleonic bayonet was found in a sand-bank.

A few years since, one of the patrolmen noticed a blackened line on the face of a dune. Digging there, the islanders discovered the site of an ancient encampment. Scattered about were rusty guns, knives made from iron hoops, broken glass, a tattered British ensign, and human bones mingled with those of cattle and seals; also an English shilling of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as sharp as when it came from the die. Nothing can ever be known about these antiquities, except that some English sea-rovers, of the time of good Queen Bess, were cast away here and probably perished. What a story it might make!

"At the French Gardens we now and then find rusty bay'nets, and such," said Naugle. "Old coffins once in a while come out o' the sand, and bodies too. Down to Foot o' the Lake Station, one time, a storm brought no end of bones out of the beach. We bury all the skilitons we find, right away. We got two fenced graveyards, but if it's too far to carry bodies, we just bury 'em in some nice civil place, with a wooden cross an' their names—if we can find 'em out. Last year the sand shifted an' we found a lot o' rough boxes with skilitons in 'em. Some had wooden shoes on. Frenchmen, I cackelate. Queer, eh?"

Picking up ancient coins and burying the unknown dead are all in the job. So too, betimes, is standing the whole night through, turning the lighthouse lenses by hand. In very cold weather the mechanism sometimes clogs, and the keeper has to swing the heavy French lenses round and round for endless hours. It must be a man's-sized job in that bitter cold, with a ninety-mile tempest howling through the winter dark, and with immense seas pounding close below, while spin-

drift slashes against the lantern! But they think nothing of it, and stick. John Gregoire, at East Light, told me he'd been there sixteen years, and was looking forward to sixteen more.

"When there's a wreck, we have somethin' doin'!" he assured me, as we sat smoking the pipe of peace. "It don't take us long to hitch up an' make a run to the beach. No S. P. C. A. rules goes when there's miles to make through the sand to a wreck!"

"Sights, is it? I've seen some good ones. Seen a steamer strike the outer bar, wash clear over an' sink on the beach. I could set here all day an' tell you the names o' wrecked ships, on Sable. One o' the cruelest times was when we had to bury all the crew o' the *Topaze*. An' we buried one man late last winter as come ashore without any face on him—just long seaweed trailin' off where it used to be, an' barnacles on his boots.

"Last November," he continued, "the *Pelican* struck in a gale, come off, an' drifted down abreast Main Station. We boarded an' anchored her. Had it bad, sir, goin' ashore. Never see worse surf. Thought we was gone sure, that time, but we made it. Accidents to life-savin' crews? Well, we got into kind of a scrape five years ago. Our life-boat pitchpoled on us. That means the surf was so high it flopped the boat right end for end, upside down. I remember once a boat done that on the nor'west bar while our crew was savin' passengers off a wreck. There was eleven women an' children drowned. Man named Hance was cox'n. He took it so much to heart that he faded right away after that an' died.

"As I was sayin', our boat pitchpoled a long ways

offshore. There was six of us. We was goin' out to a steamer, the *Stanley*. But we got rolled out, we did. Naugle, he somehow made land an' helped the rest of us in through the surf. We was all as good as dead but him. Black as coons. I was unconscious, Lynch had his hip broke, an' the rest—one of 'em, Will Clarey, nigh sixty years old—was all full o' water. We didn't get rightly well in a long time.

"The *Skidby* took about all we had to give, mister. She struck in a Feb'uary blow, a bad un, an' sent up flares. She had thirty-two men an' we had eighteen, all workin' together. Three or four hours, things was pretty lively. Our men come on horseback from all the stations, with rockets an' gear. Dark? I guess it was dark! A night wreck's the worst kind. We shot a line out, rigged a breeches-buoy, an' got all hands off. But I reckon we couldn't of done much more.

"Rules about goin' out? There's one rule. We got to go an' keep on goin' till we've been swamped three times. After that we can quit if we want to—which we mostly don't. Oh, yes, we help a lot of Americans. Fishermen, mostly, as have no wireless, an' come ashore in the fog. We like 'em. Americans are good people. We ain't forgot Miss Dix, yet."

How many of us, here at home, know the name of D. L. Dix? It's still spoken at Sable. Miss Dix visited Sable, away back in 1853, saw a terrible wreck, and noted that the equipment was poor. Later she raised funds and sent the best of life-boats and apparatus to the island. This gift was instrumental in saving very many lives. One of her boats is still in use, and Miss Dix herself will be remembered there as long as Sable Island endures; Sable Island, with its simple code of

courage, its one prime rule—"We got to go an' keep on goin' till we've been swamped three times!"

The most exciting day's work, in autumn, is the annual round-up of the wild ponies for shipment to the main. Almost everybody seems to have heard about Sable Island ponies, and wants to know more about them. I was no exception. Above all else, I wanted to see the ponies. Well, they're there, right enough; droves of them. It's strange to find such, away out in the ocean on a sand heap.

Wherever did they come from, in the first place? Nobody rightly knows. You hear all kinds of stories about that. Some say they're a New England breed. Others assert they're from France, put ashore—by whom, no one can tell—to provide food for shipwrecked mariners. Perhaps some may be descended from the stock when *L'Africaine* was wrecked, in 1822.

At times they have been estimated at five hundred; again, as low as one hundred and fifty. In good seasons they increase. When sand blows too heavily over their pasturage, they perish. Just now there may be some three hundred. A good many have been eaten at various times. An old record, in 1842, is eloquent: "We got another Fatt horse for to eat." They had to be stalked and shot like any game, though sometimes in the early days it was hard even to get within gunshot of them.

I trailed a lot of ponies over the island, but shot at them only with a camera. You have to go easy to get near enough for a picture. But you don't want to come too close, for sometimes a master-horse will charge a

man; and once he has him down, may stamp on him. When ponies are being broken, if they throw the rider they stick around and try to kick him to death. Gentle natures, obviously.

Tougher than boiled owls, the Sable ponies take no shelter at any time, and spend the winter pawing the snow from the harsh ribbon grass. In droughts they can subsist on what moisture they get from the few plants growing on the island. There's no use putting out water in pails for them; they will die rather than drink it. The dread scent of man overcomes their suffering. Even the barn colts—picked up very young and carried to a station—are wild and always bolt when they can. The very blood of freedom courses in their veins.

"When sand-storms or blizzards strike, they 'most generally drift to the lee and form groups with the weak and the young uns inside," a patrolman told me. "The old master-horse takes the most exposed place. In the old days we used mainland horses for all our work, but of late years we've been breakin' the ponies for draft-animals and for ridin' patrol. We got about fifty broke now. Usually we hitch two ponies and one mainland horse abreast, with the ponies on the outside. They work good, and they're fine for the saddle, once you show 'em who's boss. But they never get over bein' wild at heart, and they like nothin' better than to bite a man or kick him. We've had some arms and collar-bones busted by 'em on this here island, I tell you!"

They're wiry, ragged little beasts, about twelve or fourteen hands high, big-headed and Roman-nosed, mostly all bays or chestnuts. The wild horses of Tartary must be some such animals.

As early as 1803 a few of these little fighters were caught and sent to Halifax. Nearly every year since then some have been shipped, prices occasionally running as high as sixty dollars a head.

Now the exporting of ponies is the island's biggest event—barring wrecks. The sale of them helps pay expenses of the life-saving establishment.

A Sable Island round-up is an event you won't soon forget. It comes when everything else has been done, all the freight stored, all the empty oil barrels sent aboard. Those barrels, by the way, furnish a great lark for the island boys. Rolling them off the high sand cliffs, watching them leap and bound to the beach with vociferous dogs in chase, is rare sport.

All the boys took part in it, our last day, except one crippled lad. He sat on an old dory, half leaning on his crutches, and watched; just watched. All his helpless life he has lived on Sable, knowing only sand and sea; a forlorn and patient figure of resignation. Not for him a gallop on pony-back, or barrel-rolling, beach-combing, and the like. Year after endless year he has been waiting. All his life he must sit waiting—for what?

To return, however, to our muttons; in this case, wild ponies. And it is time. Steel-gray clouds, tenuous threats of fog, and white water on the outer bars all were beginning to warn the *Lady Laurier*: "Begone!"

Up at the Main Station everything was activity; for the ocean rodeo, strangest sight on any island in this part of the world, was beginning to get under way. A pound, along the shore, had been built, with wing-fences leading to its mouth. Now the tame ponies—

Duke, Beatty, Edith Cavell, and many more—were being saddled and made ready for the round-up of their wild kin.

The ocean cowboys presently sallied out and away. They swung a wide sweep, and returned from miles at a round gallopade, shouting, driving a swarm of frightened ponies in panic flight, spurning showers of sand. Some of the fugitives, in spite of yells and maneuvers, dodged the fatal wing-fences and went sky-hooting off over the dunes. But a couple of dozen found themselves shortly in durance very vile indeed. From this durance not all their running, neighing, or kicking could free them.

"That's enough now, boys, for this time!" the super directed. "Now we'll noose 'em!"

So men of the sea undertook to noose 'em. But Sable Island ponies consider it unconstitutional to be noosed and thrown. Very few Western rodeos have the edge on what happened. Everybody, human and equine, was sweating freely before the show had hardly more than commenced. Youngsters on the fences, with vociferation, were getting all the thrills of circus day. Confused bawlings arose from various earnest men:

"Now you got him!" "No I ain't!" "Dang his hide, he bit me!" "Look out there, Tom; look out, he'll kill ye!"

No deaths or broken bones resulted. The worst casualty was a shirt-sleeve torn clear off. But talk about your sand flying! It showered in machine-gun bursts. The alleged bite was only a nip, but the man nipped swore roundly that thereafter he'd prefer the south end of a pony. As a tussle it was the real thing.



The wary ponies resent "close-ups."



Broad-tired carts negotiate the sliding sand.



Exotic to the full is Cozumel's long sea-front.



Chicle en route from schooner to warehouse.

No wild broncs ever fought harder than those fiery little Sable beasts.

It took three or four men, even after the ponies had been noosed and thrown with a trip-line, and properly choked, to get a Bonaparte hitch round their froth-flecked jaws. Then roping their feet started the battle all over again. 'Ware hoofs! They thrashed in stark frenzy. But one by one the fighters were overcome, and with bound legs were heaved into waiting boats. And away with a lift of surf and a long sweep of oars the captives surged, toward the *Lady Laurier*.

There still greater terrors awaited them. Hooked by the foot ropes, and with a clattering of devilish engines, they soared aloft. They pendulumed inverted over the sea, swung inboard, plumped down on deck. And after that, sailors dragged them into stalls, loosed them, and sprang clear of the flailing hoofs.

The ponies' freedom forever ended, their slavery to man, the abhorred, had begun.

"All hands aboard!" the order came. Now it was good-by; and a long isolation of months would settle down upon that strange graveyard of the Atlantic, where unknown dead of every nation lie.

The island's whole population stood on the beach to see us off. Some of them looked a bit melancholy. After the good cheer and excitement of boat-days, perhaps they found the prospect of solitude once more a trifle somber. A few of the husky islanders shoved us off; the launch picked us up, and—*putt-putt-putt*—away over a pearly sea, with an angry wound of sunset bleeding along the horizon, we heaved for the ship. Huge cloud-banks ballooned over the island, and the

bars were growling. To-day had been fair, but to-morrow—? We had stayed long enough.

"Fog's coming on, boys," judged the captain, when we had scrambled up the ladder. Then, as he climbed to the bridge and rang full-speed ahead, he ordered the man at the wheel: "Course is northwest!"

"That's the last till next time," the mate remarked. "Thick weather comin'!"

The propeller began to pulse. Three long whistle-blasts saluted the island. We swung a wide arc and pointed into the north. Sable faded. Evening grayed, and fogs began to wrap us in their wool. As dusk descended, a stab of radiance pierced it from the faithful lighthouse that, come what may, never must "go black."

Then the fogs wholly took us. Light, island, and all vanished. And so we left Sable brooding amid her treacherous seas; Sable, that land of men whereof the world, which owes them so infinitely much, hears so very little; that island of strange events and of unheralded, unrewarded brave fellows—heroes all!

X

QUEER COZUMEL

The Odd, Out-o'-the-way Island of the Swallows on the Far-off Coast of Yucatan

IT took the United States navy to get me to Cozumel, for "there ain't no boats a-runnin'" from Key West, where I was, to that all but unknown little Maya island. Baffled, I welcomed the chance to fly there with an aircraft scouting squadron bound for maneuvers at Panama. Armed with a permit from the Secretary of the Navy, I climbed aboard one of the planes in Key West Harbor; and presently—not without certain misgivings—was whirled aloft toward a goal one of the strangest of my many wanderings.

The story of that nearly five-hour flight tempts me to description, but more important matters wait. So let it pass with but the mention that like a flock of swiftest gulls we skimmed above the cream-tinted expanses of Havana; then eastward down a patchwork coast fringed with gorgeous-hued lagoons and surfs of white spun-glass; and so, battered by what seemed a deafening cyclone, out past Cape San Antonio and over the perilous Yucatan Channel. There heavy seas seemed (from the clouds) only rippled silver silk. Across that silk we winged a bee-flight to low and man-

grove-tangled coasts. So, finally, down we swooped to the waiting supply ship *Sandpiper*, anchored in a reef-guarded lagoon off Puerto Morelos. And there I was in Mexico.

Morelos would have delighted O. Henry. It seemed to have stepped square out of his pages. Beach of blinding white sand, a "lighthouse" made of a lantern on a mast, thatched huts, half-ruined warehouse, mule-operated tramway, and sagging wharf, all dominated by a single mighty palm over which the buzzards wheeled, were the stuff whence fiction and romance are woven.

So, too, the Mexican flag that promptly fluttered down. The fact that the natives hadn't heard of any war with "Tio Sam" made no difference. What but war could explain the arrival of a naval vessel and some twenty-six fighting planes? Mayor, maritime police, chief of the lighthouse, and all, these Yucatecans instantly surrendered at discretion. *Kamerad!*

"I reckon they think we've got 'em captured," judged Lieutenant Handly, pilot of my plane. "We've got to tell 'em they're not prisoners."

As the only Spanish speaker of the outfit, I took an oar with a landing-party to present Americano compliments and adjust international affairs. Some of the Morelians fled to cover, but most of them stood firm—brown men in faded blue and ragged white, bare-foot or in sandals, with belted machetes. One Indian drove his wife into a hut, with beatings. Let her look at the white men? Not much! But lots of children, in simple green and purple, watched us arrive; and so did most of the women, swathed in head-shawls. Likewise "dogs without a feather on 'em," as one of our

sailor boys declared; and, of course, all the officials, almost equal in number to the total population.

Soon the entente cordiale was cemented by many handshakes and several packages of most highly valued Americano cigarettes. When we launched our boat again, the *alcalde*—mayor—himself rolled up his fragmentary trousers and helped shove us off. It isn't every day one has an *alcalde* do that!

We lay off the beach at Morelos that night. Next day, transferred to the *Quail*, away I cruised toward Cozumel Island, perhaps twenty miles to s'uthard. There, as I later learned, another surrender took place. For when the *Quail* hove in sight a prominent official smote his breast and cried:

"Behold, it is war! The Americanos come! We are lost. They can shoot and kill us. Resistance is hopeless. But we can die like brave men! We can show them true heroism for La Patria!" Despite all which, the only shots exchanged were a few shots of rum at a zinc bar—but let us not anticipate. The horrors of this kind of warfare are not insuperable.

Cozumel, sacred island of the ancient Mayas, first revealed itself to me as a long blur on hazy, tropical sea horizons. Out of that blur presently emerged a very low, flat land, edged with a black iron-bound shore broken by strips of dazzling beach; jade and emerald surfs bursting to ivory; palms and all that sort of thing. Soon, moreover, I descried quite the story-book kind of settlement, with houses of thatch, larger buildings of many colors, red-tiled roofs, galleries, and green blinds; also a wireless mast, a skeleton light-tower, and no few gleaming sails in the open roadstead that serves as a harbor.

So this is San Miguel, eh? Astonishingly civilized! Back in Key West I'd been told to go heavily armed—"Because in Cozumel they murder a man for twenty-five cents!" and "Because those Maya Indians will probably butcher and eat you on the beach!" This smiling, open-faced little town didn't look at all like cannibalism. Plucking up courage, I figured I might possibly survive. Meanwhile (as above) some of the Cozumeliños were even more alarmed than I was. Also, considerably more heroic.

Captain Mytinger of the *Quail*—a splendid fellow, like all the outfit—joined a boat crew in donning "whites" to land me in style. The motor tried to "conk out," but we got it going before any of the inhabitants detected trouble. It took style, and a lot of brass-bound nerve as well, to make that landing. My going ashore was totally illegal. You know how they are in Mexico: great sticklers for the Law. Well, I had no passport whatever; nothing to vouch for me but a few letters from the navy, and a publisher's "blurb" with my picture on it. So all the swank we could muster wasn't any too much.

Inwardly dubious, but outwardly in the smartest of nabob class, we foamed ashore to a long wharf where nearly every able-bodied man, boy, and dog in Cozumel, all excitement, had gathered to witness the great event.

Even with the Stars and Stripes snapping boldly and gaily, it's a bit disconcerting to land, contrary to all law and order, in a foreign and tropical island under the scrutiny of hundreds of beady black eyes set in hundreds of copper Indian faces. But what was this? Suddenly, twin stars of reassurance, two bright blue

and beaming optics grew visible in a ruddily cheerful face under a pith helmet.

"Hello, there!" I hailed. "You're English, aren't you?"

"Right-o!"

And that's how I met Alan Moysey Adams, chicle king of Cozumel. Incidentally, no matter how far and strange the island, isn't there always a Briton with blue eyes, ruddy face, and pith helmet, to "jolly well" answer: "Right-o!"? The Eagle at such times forgets to tweak the Lion's tail. "Have a drink?" is in order. Very gladly Eagle and Lion clink glasses, with a "Here's how!"

The captain and I landed (still contrary to Law), and Adams escorted us up the wharf, that groaned under the accompanying populace. He led me to ever so many custom-houses, port captain's offices, health officials' bureaus, and so on; and my Spanish all but expired under a shrapnel barrage of questions, while the populace massed itself outside. A man from Mars wouldn't have created any more disturbance than did my entry.

All the officials studied all my letters, and did a little swanking too as they pretended to be able to read 'em. The bluff was really glorious. The "U. S. N." letter-heads impressed them a bit, but it was the publisher's blurb that really put the capstone on the arch of acceptance. Might that not, after all, be something highly official? *Quién sabe?* Anyhow, governmental suspicions collapsed at the feet of the Americano. I was initiated, passed and raised, shaken hands with, six times all round, O.K.'d, received as a man and brother; given the keys of Cozumel and even a flowery

letter of welcome, crammed with international amity. I had met the enemy and they were mine. Saved!

In the Maya tongue, still spoken on the island—for nearly all the inhabitants are Indians of that ancient race—Cozumel means "Island of Swallows." The captain and I were invited to try several of these swallows without delay. I won't speak for him; but as for me, I pronounce the Cozumel swallows strictly 100 per cent. Adams, the chicle king, however, presently led me away.

"Of course, you'll stay at our diggings," he asserted. "We're the only English-speaking people here. The hotel simply won't do, don't you know. Our home is yours, old chap."

And so it was; and, O miracle! inside of a quarter-hour I was sitting in an English home with wicker furniture, a tiger-skin, and everything (just like a scene in a play), with the chicle king and his queen and little Princess Mary (as English as any *Wonderland Alice*), having afternoon tea. A long way, that, from being butchered for a quarter and eaten on the beach!

The Adamses live, by the way, in a real English garden with a lawn and orchids and gorgeous flowers of all sorts; and moreover, a Maya stone god or idol standing amid the shrubbery.

"That's our monkey-god," says the Princess Mary, with an engaging, happy smile. "I love him, and I love Dingo, too—he's my dog—and if I could only get a jigsaw puzzle I'd love Cozumel, even though there's not a soul to talk to but mother and father, and it's sometimes rather odd!"

All my time on the island I stayed with those kindest, most generous of people. Quite alone, their house

a tiny oasis of our-kind-of-life in a desert of other-kind-of-life, they "carry on" in a manner most amazing. Just themselves to talk with; few papers and scant news; almost total isolation from the world—nothing matters. Rigorously they maintain all standards.

"Of *course* we have afternoon tea, every day," Adams explained over the tea-table. (A table with a "cozy." Imagine that, in Cozumel!) "I always come home for it. If we let down one peg, we'd slump right to the bottom—go native, and presently be running barefoot. Tea is our bulwark."

Isn't that English for you? With plenty of tea and white flannel, one can go immensely far.

Without Adams I couldn't have penetrated far beneath the surface of Cozumel. Just that surface, though, would fill an artist with strange delights. "Queer" is the most fitting word to describe this tropical island, so different from any other I've ever seen. Different, because here still lives the Maya, descendant of that half-fabulous and mighty race which built the ruined wonder-cities of Yucatan; which offered human hearts to Kukulcan, the feathered serpent god; which flung sacrificial maidens, decked with jade and gold and flowers, into the deep subterranean pool at Chichen Itzá.

It gives you a start—as if you had miraculously pulled aside the curtain of Time—to behold Maya faces in the living flesh. Yet there on Cozumel those faces, by the hundred, still exist. The sloping foreheads, full lips, strongly aquiline noses, tip-tilted Mongolian eyes—yes, here are Maya types, just as on

stelæ, temples, and monuments. But never till you really see the living Mayas can you realize the wonderful color of this race. Sometimes that color is silken coppery, again a clear yellow or a lustrous gold such as I for one have never found anywhere else. Amazed, you study it.

Save for the Adams family and a handful of Spaniards, Cozumel is Mayan. The people are integrally part of the Maya race of between three and four hundred thousand that to-day labors for foreign masters in the Yucatan henequen plantations, or gathers chicle in deadly forests, for American jaws to chew. A short and stocky race, almost beardless and with coarse black hair, they remind you of the Japanese. How can they be other than of Asiatic stock? This question, though, about which such tempests rage, I wisely let alone.

Though all memory of their former imperial glory has utterly departed, they still speak the ancient Maya tongue, just as for thousands of years even before the Spanish conquest. This tongue, by the way, is one of the very few aboriginal languages that have ever "stood off" a white men's speech. Even to-day Spanish controls only the cities of Yucatan. The country at large still conducts its business—especially the chicle business—in Maya; and on Cozumel you hear it everywhere.

How strange a language! It's full of jerks, pauses, chokings, efforts, of amazing starts and quivers, as if the Indians were in pain; and every sentence seems to end on a rising note of inquiry. Those who know, claim no white man can ever successfully imitate the Maya sounds. Many times when Mayas have told me words

and I have tried to utter them, my hearers have been moved to merriment. To them it seems a huge joke, hearing a foreigner attempting to imitate their syllables. Stolid Indians? Not a bit of it! And how they laughed one day when I ventured too near a chained spider-monkey in a tree on the Plaza, and when the monkey leaped on me, snatched my Panama, and tried to tear the brim off!

A certain ancient Maya, barelegged and with a vast sombrero, one blazing noontime brought me a printed specimen of their ancient speech. We had a drink together, and then sat on the high, raised sidewalk in front of a dazzling whitewashed chicle warehouse, with long surfs curving off at either hand—surfs where pelicans dived and fishermen waded as they cast their nets. Here now is a bit of what he brought me—the inaccessible language of a race mysterious beyond all telling:

U tepal, binix molocob tulacal balcah tu zínil; zayhom tana-mob, bin yanacob tu noh; zayhom yucob, bin yanacob tu dzic; bin yanac tu dzic lae, u lobil uinicob, ah-ma-oczahob ti yal-mah-thanil Dios tulacal; ti tun u binob ti hun-lukul núm-yail mitnal tu lamay cab.

Which is to say:

The whole world shall gather, from every hand. The good, the humble, shall be at his right hand; the evil and the rebels shall be at his left. At his left also shall be the wicked men, those who did not obey all the commandments of God. Thence they shall go to the eternal torments of hell, to the central point of the world.

It was another Maya, in a blue apron, who later explained to me just how the immense stones of the long-ruined Cozumel temples and pyramids were put

in place by "Los Antiguos," the ancients from whom he had descended.

"They were dwarfs, short and thick," he expounded, sitting at a cement table in the little "puesto" or bar beside the Plaza, drinking my beer. "The small doors of the temples prove it. Strong men. *Sí, señor*, very strong!"

"They must have been strong," I agreed, "to lift all those mighty stones."

"Ah, but they did not lift them!" the Maya explained. "No human being could have done that. One of their great *caciques*, who built the temples, used to sit on the ground with bamboo shoots and whistles in his hand. At his order, señor, the stones obeyed. They were not cut out with stone hammers, nor were they carried, as you white men think. No; at the chief's command they took wings and flew to their right places. Wooden beams and everything that was needed flew through the air like birds!"

"But," I cautiously objected, "how were they fed? You can't expect beams and stones to work like that without eating."

"Quite true," my Indian assented, swallowing an olive—for in Cozumel, olives always are served with beer. "After the beams and stones reached their places, their wings fell off at once and they haven't worked since. And there the great beams and stones are to this very day, to prove it!"

Convinced, I bought my golden-skinned Maya still another drink.

From the Plaza where I learned all this, San Miguel radiates—San Miguel, the town where live

about fifteen hundred of the island's eighteen hundred inhabitants. The center of it all is a statue of Juarez, Mexico's supreme hero. A concrete circle, dazzling in the sun, forms the civic center, and all about it lie police and governmental buildings; barracks where shabby soldiers pace on guard, red-tiled shops, bars, billiard-rooms, an enormous school—one of the many schools now replacing the churches and constituting Mexico's greatest hope. Partly shaded by huge laurel-trees where tick-birds perch and mocking-birds delightfully "maken melodie," the Plaza drowns, with vignettes of brilliant sea half glimpsed beyond the custom-house.

By no means must we forget the clock-tower, one of the most simple and appealing little towers imaginable. It's unique in that it announces every hour twice over. First, its chime gives a fourfold jingle; then the hour strikes. Two minutes later it strikes again.

"So that if you wake up in the night, señor," Cozumel explains, "and miss the first striking, you may have another chance. A good idea, *no es verdad?*" You must admit it is. Waking at small hours, you may also hear serenades, old Spanish songs "to the sound of the light guitar." This gives you quite a thrill, even though you realize the ardent swain himself is probably not singing at all. No; it's customary to hire serenaders. Thus does professionalism invade even the greatest sport in the world—love-making.

Hard-trodden, rocky, and grass-grown streets where casual pigs root, stretch away between blindingly lime-washed walls over which nod cocoanut-palms, bananas, mango-trees, and papayas. Along those streets uncertainly progress bicycles, huge-wheeled carts, even

Fords, a quartet of which have already invaded Cozumel. You can wander in search of color; or, more lazily, just loaf on a Plaza bench, smoke your corn-husk cigarette and drowse in the tropic sun, and let the island's life drift past you.

That life, you soon realize, has no place for the black man. The negro isn't wanted in Mexico. Even if Mexico in general and Cozumel in particular are not exactly a white man's country, at least they're an Indian's.

"Five hundred pesos bond has to be posted by any employer of negro labor for every black man or woman brought in," Adams informed me. "That's to insure the black being deported again when the job is finished. These people here simply won't have negroes playing in their yard." You see no dusky faces at Cozumel.

Loafing, you behold a barefoot old Maya woman trudging onward in a head-shawl and a long, elaborately embroidered *huipili* or dress. Next comes a fat official with whiskers, spectacles, a pink shirt, and a huge umbrella over his wide-brimmed sombrero, to keep the sun from cooking his brains.

Behold now a boy with a huge tin box on his head. The boy slaps his hands together and then pounds his box to announce that Cozumel's bread supply is going round. Another boy shoves a barrow with ice-cream. (Oh, yes, there's an ice-plant on the island, also an electric-light plant.) Three Indians pass, dangling sections of *jabalí*, or wild boar, crudely roasted with the skin on, hair and all. The boar's head looks ugly enough, with its long snout and curved, wicked tusks. Soon the boar will become *bisté de puerco*, or "pork beefsteak." Any kind of sliced meat is always "beef-

steak." Your venison comes to you as *bisté de venado*, "deer beefsteak"!

Diet at Cozumel, by the way, isn't overluxurious. Fish and meat stew, with lots of garlic, capers, and chile; corn-cakes baked in an iron pot; plantains; *casón*, a kind of edible shark; beans, and rice, are about the total menu. Sometimes you get *totopostes*, which are big, thin, round tortillas that come threaded through the middle on a string. You put your dinner on the *totoposte*, for a plate, and then finish by eating the plate—a real economy in dish-washing. Vegetables and fruits are scarce, which seems strange in that tropical land. The Mayas simply don't care for such.

The wild-boar-carrying men, by the way, are bare-legged and wear sandals. Their dress is simply an undershirt, apron, white knee-trousers. This is the usual masculine costume, just as the head-shawl and long, embroidered *huipili* is customary for women. Cozumel is at least one place where few flappers, bobbed and short-skirted, are to be found. No American tourists have as yet invaded it. Life still goes on there dreamily, pleasantly, and with a feeling of *mañana* that really never comes.

No daily newspaper vexes its calm. No library tempts one to waste time in reading. But in one respect the island—like all of that Mexico whereof it forms a rather detached fragment—is not only very much up to the minute, but from our point of view far ahead of it. I mean, Labor.

"Unionism is supreme in Cozumel," I was informed. "An employer can neither hire, pay, nor fire his help. If you even discharge a servant, you have to pay several weeks' wages in advance. The union attends

to everything. This union is the *Liga de los Obreros*. Every worker belongs. Otherwise, no job. All the members' names are written on blackboards every day, and from these lists the union chooses its workers, the top names getting the first jobs, and so on down. The secretary gives out the work at 6:30 every morning, and if you don't show up in time you're out of luck, for there are never enough jobs to go round."

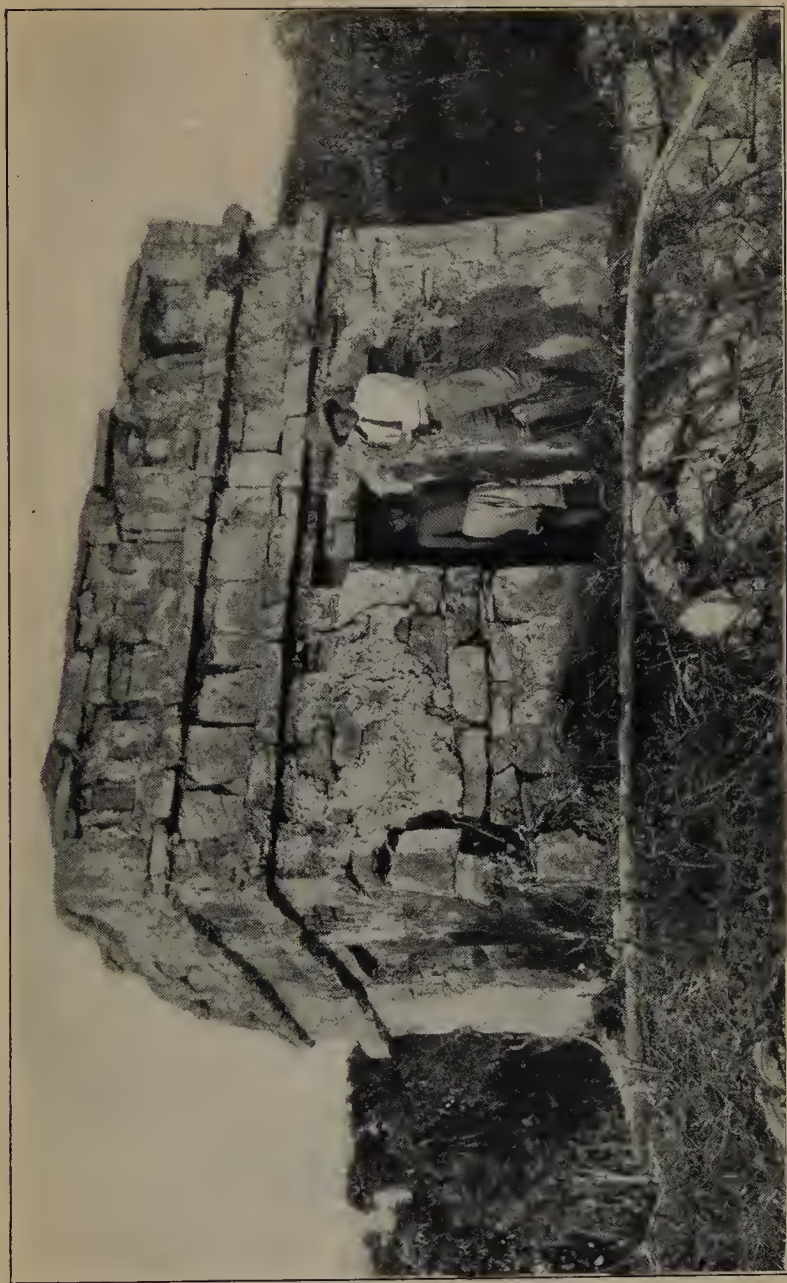
But as you may always get a job some other time, and two or three days a week are enough work, anyhow, why worry?

The employer pays the union, and the union divides the money among its men. The work is mostly lightening chicle and other freight between wharf and warehouses or back again; packing, storing, and handling goods. No unloading machinery is used; and little horse, mule or wagon power. Men's sweating backs serve all needs.

"Why not use wagons?" I innocently asked a toiling old Maya.

"Ah, no, señor! Think of the honest men out of jobs if horses did their work!" One has to admit the logic of that.

Five hundred tons of freight a day, landed and warehoused by straining man-power alone; it makes you ache to think of it. In Progreso, Yucatan, I later found that with every ton carried, the men "changed off." Not so at Cozumel. There all day long the Mayas carry loads under which a white man could hardly stagger; and at night they still come up smiling for more. They're very evidently of the same race that once transported all those huge stones for temples, monuments, and pyramids.



Courtesy The Carnegie Institution.

One of Cozumel's small Maya temples.



San Miguel's civic center, with its unique clock-tower.



The Maya to-day is satisfied with rude thatched huts.

Cozumel employers suffer more than Cozumel workmen. For the employer can't fire a loafer. Neither can he reward an extra-good workman, or retain such a one in his service. All he can do is report the idler to the union, which—theoretically—attends to the case. And the extra-good man must next day work somewhere else. It's a new deal all round, like a card game, every morning.

About the only activity the union doesn't control is the spending of the money. Many a Cozumeliño's dream is to sail in a little coasting-boat over to Progreso and get rid of his savings in the shortest possible time. Powerful beverages, painted ladies, and plenty of riding round in *fotingos*, together with the goddess of gambling, presently remove all cash—which, by the way, is far less than it seems, a peso Mexican being worth only about forty-seven cents American.

Then back again the busted Maya comes, once more to shoulder stupendous loads all day under a broiling sun.

"Easy come, easy go! . . ."

I made acquaintance with many of these childlike, good-natured, and simple folk—once the builders of gigantic cities, now (though no man knows why) content to fetch and carry, to fish, till a bit of rocky soil, or lie under a thatched roof in a sisal-fiber hammock, smoking cigarettes, while *la vieja* cooks in a Standard Oil tin over three stones on the dirt floor, babies and flies swarm, dogs scratch, pigs grunt, and the trade-wind drily rustles palm-fronds in the sun.

It was Roberto Polanc, a bronze young sloe-eyed Maya, who one day took me out for a trek through the

bush, to see some ruins of *los antepasados*, "the passed-away ones." Incidentally, I still bear reminders of that trek. For the Yucatan tick—but we're coming to that bird later.

Roberto, immune like all Indians to tick-bites, went bare of foot and leg. Snakes? Oh, no, señor; few venomous snakes on Cozumel. Later, I heard four or five bad ones had been found there odd times. Glad I didn't know it when I went ruin-hunting! For the Yucatan snakes—the yellow-jawed *tomigof*, the *cuatromarices*, the *cola-de-hueso*, and others are a tribe to be sedulously avoided by all who love life.

Out of town and up the rocky shore we trudged in a battering heat, with Polanc carrying my camera and chattering an endless string of information about the crotons and calabash-trees, the custard-apples and guavas, the cacti, corals, birds, even the crabs and lizards. A story-book figure, this Polanc; and what a lad to laugh! "Nueva-York" was all he knew of America. He longed to go there—but without a centavo, how was that possible? And work was not to be had, for he was too young to join the union, and "*aquí trabajan los ligados, nada más.*" Only union men can work here, señor.

He led me an endless way then over limestone walls and through a maze of jungle where thorn-bushes damaged clothing and skins. At last—

"Señor, *unas ruinas!*"

That was one of life's big moments, to behold ruins of the ancient ones looming up out of the deep bush. Not a sound there, save the fluting of unseen birds, the far-away grumble of surfs on coral. Silence and the mighty sun dominated long walls, a tower with gum-

trees sprawling atop, while serpent-like cacti writhed over stones that for long centuries had been down-crumbling.

All round the tower lay a labyrinth of ruins, masonry, chambers, tombs—"of chiefs, señor," Polanc asserted. And there were flights of steps leading nowhere, walls choked with the dust of desolation infinite, a cemetery where every bone had long since crumbled to powder; all buried in jungles dense as only in the tropics.

The lizard, the leaf-cutting ant, the *cao*—Maya for blackbird—the vulture and the land-crab, these were now the only dwellers where perhaps in centuries gone some Maya king or priest had raised hymns to the feathered serpent; chanting processions had passed with human victims; serfs had toiled and died; or copal fires had wreathed their smoke against the azure sky. Where now are the hands that had so deftly laid these stones? Where all those vanished tribes? Mystery!

Once Cozumel (the wise ones say) was a very holy Mecca of the Mayas. Pilgrims journeyed thither from all over Yucatan, by canoes and on stone roads and causeways, to the temples there. Parts of those roads still exist on the island, built of great limestone slabs worn smooth by feet innumerable. No few of the temples still remain in the jungle and along the coasts. Such are to be found at San Tomás, Cinco Puertas, and Casa Real. One strange ruin still shows sculptured figures each with its right hand raised (like a traffic cop's), as if prohibiting entrance.

Shrines, chambers, patios, stairways, all are now disintegrating. Pillars and pyramids are crumbling, sink-

ing back into the forest whereof the vigorous tree roots tirelessly wrench mighty stones apart. Man, too, had played his rôle of destruction. One Cozumel temple was recently torn down for stone to build a jail. And some few years ago Mexican vandals used another near San Miguel as a quarry for cut stones—stones, by the way, patiently pecked out by the ancient Mayas using no tools but flint chisels and stone hammers. For the Mayas never advanced much beyond the neolithic stage. Despite their wonderful calendar, their higher mathematics, and accurate astronomy that could predict eclipses long in advance, their only metals were copper and gold. And these they used for ornaments alone.

Southwest of Cozumel, on the mainland, the temples at Tulum have fared somewhat better. Pilfering hands have largely spared them. Still, to-day they stand boldly looking seaward, as if to descry the coming of those legendary white and bearded god-men destined to deal the final blow to a civilization that, though already perishing, had been by far the most brilliant ever independently developed in this our Western world.

And now that we're in the deep jungle, it's perhaps the best possible time to notice birds and ticks. The ticks you're positively bound to notice after you've been in the bush, whether you will or no. The birds are worth your thought, because, though the island is hardly more than twelve miles from the mainland, it is remarkable for the number of peculiar species that not only fail to exist in Yucatan, but are found nowhere else in the world than just on Cozumel. As I'm no bird

expert, why not let one, Ludlow Griscom, give the facts? He says, in substance:

Their origin is a problem. Cozumel is a great exception to the rule that island fauna is like that of the adjacent mainland. Here the species are very distinct. Nearly half are related to West Indian forms, instead of Central American ones. One, a thrasher, is the only tropical representative of its group, which does not occur nearer than the mountains of Mexico, eight hundred miles away. It is a close cousin to a species in the eastern United States. The fact is remarkable that a considerable group of North American species which migrate in winter to the West Indies, also occur in Cozumel. Such mainland species as are found there are comparatively rare and local. The fact that some one hundred species of land birds are found on the adjacent mainland but do not occur on Cozumel, shows how sedentary many tropical species are.

I only wish the Yucatan tick was sedentary too. But alas! no. He loves to travel, preferably on strangers. He seems to let the Indians alone; but when he gets hold of a white man, *mmmmm!* . . . His principal name is *Garrapata*, and his victim's name is Despair. He's blent of fire, red-pepper, tabasco sauce, dynamite, vitriol, pizen, and pure cussedness. Nothing will keep him out; and when he gets in, you long to move out of your skin and let him keep the darned thing—it's no good to *you* any more.

A friend of mine who had been in Cozumel once drew for me a portrait of a Yucatan tick, with a cork-screw for a nose. Error! *Señor Garrapata* carries a full set of bits and braces, drills, barbed arrows, trench-tools, and high explosives. He's microscopic, but when he digs in and starts his bomb-proof trenches, you know just where his campaign is under way. And he

attacks you in regiments, brigades, armies. Attila the Hun was a philanthropist by comparison.

So hellish is the Yucatan tick's disposition that he ups and dies on the premises, bequeathing terrific agonies. All that you tickless people know about itching and torment is mere child's play. Mosquito-bites, by contrast, become downright delicious. Wasp-stings are a treat. And "the flavor lasts." It takes you many weeks to recover from a tick-barrage. After I'd been away from Cozumel all of two months, my tick-bites were still visible. Like love in some phases, they'll probably leave permanent scars.

Alcohol and tobacco are the one best bet against the *garrapata*. Externally, I mean. Internally, one longs for quick poison to end it all. You take pure alcohol, soak leaf tobacco in it, and rub yourself about twenty-four hours a day with the mixture. This may possibly discourage the tick and allow you to exist without screaming. But really the most satisfactory method is to cut out the bitten place. And only time can assuage your anguish. What pikers the medieval masters of torture must have been! Now if they'd only known how to apply Yucatan ticks to their victims—

You come back from ruin-hunting, to find a pale golden light all across the sea, and a white bird of a schooner softly folding its wings as wearily it slows to rest off the long beach where surfs are creaming. A canoe, laden with plantains and pineapples, foams ashore, driven by paddling Indians with huge sombreros. The town bell has already given two musical strokes and then one, announcing the arrival of a sailing-vessel. Three double strokes mean a steamer, five

a motor-boat. The red-white-and-green flag of Mexico at the schooner's masthead waves gently in the dying breeze against a sky ineffably pure.

Down along the shore you wander, past a moldering wreck, old boilers and anchors, piles of boxed-up gasoline tins. In Cozumel, as everywhere these days, gasoline is the blood of life. Brown nets hang on wattled fences over which lean almond-trees and sour-sops, oranges and oleanders. Seagrapes and Australian pines stand sentinels along the shining sand. Gun on shoulder, heavy game-bag slung on his back, an aged Maya trudges homeward to some one or other of those pink, yellow, or blue plastered little houses where brown and naked babies crawl in Edenic simplicity.

"Surely," you think, "nothing could be more picturesque than this particular bit of Cozumel!" But lo! presently you catch a glimpse, through an iron-barred window, of one Indian woman smoking a cigar as she combs and braids the long, lustrous hair of another—both women sitting on a red-tiled floor. The next house, its doorway ornamented with an eagle figure-head from some long-forgotten ship, shows you a girl squatting in front of a chair, and on the chair a sewing-machine that the girl is operating by hand. Queer, eh?

You catch swift pictures as you walk: a *cantina* with white-clad men playing dominoes, drinking, arguing politics—not the safest of sports in Mexico! Patios where game-cocks strut and challenge the world, shrilly as professional patriots; where an indulgent father plays an accordion while children laugh and dance; where a slim boy with a knife is cutting up a shark hung from a red-gum-tree.

As you reach the wharf you encounter an Indian carrying the most tremendous lot of hens, and children running home with bits of fish strung on thatch-palm cords. A fishing-boat is in. At the wharf end you linger amid Indians to watch the fish as a brown boy dives clean under water in the boat's "well" and with his bare hands catches the one, all alive and flapping, that each customer chooses. The buyers toss their coins, a link, into a rude pottery dish on deck and stalk off with their purchases.

And now you see the name of the new-come schooner is *León de los Mares*, and agree with a wrinkled Maya who looks at least two hundred, that "Lion of the Seas" is a most beautiful name for a schooner, indeed. *Que sí, señor!* As evening fades, while umbers and soft pearls appear above the far-off Yucatan shore, you know that Cozumel is no real island after all, but a dream-island of mysterious swallows that like those of Becquer's lovely poem "Can nevermore return . . ."

By next morning, however, your mood has changed and you consign Cozumel to hotter places even than the tropics; for by then the ticks have begun their work in good earnest. And talking about stings, you come to learn of several other kinds that operate there. The Latin-American is extraordinarily fond of the law. There's enough law on Cozumel, and to spare. For instance, merely try to import or export anything, and you'll likely have no end of amusement.

"You've got to use just exactly the right kind of documentary stamps for everything," one business man told me over iced beverages. "And almost always,

when you go to buy such stamps, there aren't enough. It's like the paper money that no longer exists in Mexico. If paper money were legal now, everybody'd begin printing it. So only a little gold and a whole lot of silver are circulated; with silver at two dollars sixteen Mexican per dollar U. S. And for any fair-sized transaction you have to bring the money on a mule.

"Oddly enough, though, no such amounts—big canvas bags of silver—are ever stolen. You can drive mule-loads of money through the streets in perfect safety.

"But about the stamps. Every official differs from every other concerning the exact kind to use. If you take any official's O.K., another one usually says: 'Ah, but he was mistaken!' Furthermore, as you can be fined up to four thousand dollars for using the wrong stamps, you perceive the life of a business man in Cozumel isn't a happy one."

My friend took a sip and mournfully added:

"I haven't forgotten, yet, the fine I once paid because a certain official had stolen all the right stamps, and another official guessed another kind would do—and guessed wrong!"

Yes, other things besides insects know how to sting you in Cozumel. Just try to get a shipment through the custom-house, and you're in for a heap of fun. It beats a cut-out puzzle or a word-square, settling the right classification; whether, for instance, potatoes are foodstuff, or seeds, or antiscorbutic medicine, or what-not. All kinds of letters and wires to Mexico City to find out; and after a few weeks, when you get the right data, your potatoes have all rotted or

sprouted or otherwise perished. As a game, some game!

"Not long ago," my friend continued, "a certain official here was about ten thousand pesos short. He knew an inspector was coming, so he went to all his intimates.

"'Just lend me a few hundred to make up the deficit,' he begged. 'After the inspection, you'll get it right back.'

"They all fell for it and he made up the amount. The inspection went off finely. Next day so did the official. He left for parts unknown, not only with the ten thousand he'd first taken, but also with the ten his friends had lent him. Did anybody object? Not greatly. You see, it tickled their sense of humor. And the cream of the joke was that he left forty-seven cents Mexican in the safe. No *garrapata* could sting any harder than that! Oh, yes, the Government caught him, in time. But they never made him disgorge. Felt sorry for him—losing his position like that, and all."

One day I saw a happy, eager crowd of school-children starting on a hike. How innocent, expectant, and joyful they looked! It did my heart good to see their beaming, glad young faces. Youth—white or Maya—how wonderful a treasure!

"*Buenos días*, young friends," I greeted. "And whither bound this fine morning?"

The leader touched his sombrero and cheerily made answer:

"*A robar unas milpas!*" That is, "To rob some gardens!" Talk about your Boy Scouts! Thus merrily doth the young idea of Cozumel learn to shoot.

That young idea is plentiful. Those who claim the

Mayas are dying out should visit Cozumel and see the swarms of children there. What is there for them all to do? No chance for them as newsboys, because there's no newspaper. And as for becoming bootblacks—well, a bootblack in that barefooted or sandaled island would have less chance than a watermelon at a colored picnic. By the way, I found a few red-headed boys on Cozumel. What remote Irish ancestor once swash-buckled in those romantic parts, I wonder? Page Mr. Namgay Doola! A red-headed Maya Indian is worth noticing any day.

Children and chicle seem the island's biggest products. And on chicle, especially, rests the life of Cozumel. Though it's only a small island, perhaps six miles wide by twenty-four long, it's one of the world's greatest chicle centers. The prosperity of Cozumel depends almost entirely on the activity of American gum-chewing jaws.

Please, by the way, don't say "chickel." It's "*chee-clay*." And no doubt some of you who read these words are even now masticating gum from Cozumel. Not that the island itself produces any of that precious latex "bled" from the zapote or sapodillo tree. No; Cozumel is only a concentrating and shipping point. And during lively months, two hundred tons will be no unusual amount for the island to handle.

The epic of the *chicleros'* lonely and deadly perilous toil in snake-infested jungles of Yucatan and Central America is not now for us. What tense drama, though, lies in that battle with the wilderness, where tree-climbing men with keen machetes often swiftly chop off their snake-bitten fingers—or even hands and arms—

to save their very lives, but in spite of all heroic measures sometimes die frightful deaths in the bush! I could write pages of horrifying snake-stories.

When you're sometime putting a penny in the slot for a neatly wrapped bit of gum, give a second's thought to where that gum originated, and how perhaps some lowly Maya bartered his life for it.

The story of chicle is a long and devious one. All we can glimpse is its relation to Cozumel. Out of the formidable Yucatan bush, all through the working season of June to February, the boiled and hard-packed chicle comes by mule-trams and on mule-back to tiny coast stations; thence by schooner—ten or fifteen tons at a time—to Cozumel. The individual blocks weigh about twenty-two pounds. And here, too, a little stinging process gets in its work, unless the buyer is thoroughly wide-awake.

For the simple-minded Maya is growing civilized. He has learned to put clay and stones inside the blocks of gum, carefully covering them with layers of first-quality chicle. Once a pair of overalls was discovered in a block. Oh, yes, modern ideas are making headway, even in the fever, tick and snake infested forests of Yucatan!

You get a vivid notion of America's rapacity for chewing-gum as you stand on the wharf at Cozumel and watch the huge *lanchetes* or barges being sculled ashore from the schooners. With long sweeps manned by bare-armed, golden-skinned Mayas, the barges labor in over tumbling, amethystine surges. Pelicans wheel and plunge, asplash; needle-fish dart at gleaming schools of sardines; and the high tropic sun glows down on colors that the northland never knows. Mean-

while, reeking with sweat, their sculptural muscles tensed, the Indian bargemen bring their heavy craft to land.

The sweet and languid perfume of the chicle rises all about you as powerful arms swing up the bales, a hundred and fifty pounds each, to the wharf. There two men hoist every bale to the neck and shoulders of a laborer. These carriers wear pads and big pieces of bagging for protection. White-clad, they trudge up the wharf, only to be replaced by others and still others. Antlike, the procession toils away to the chicle warehouse with its blinding whitewashed walls of masonry, its vast dim shed areek with perfume. There two other men help lower the bales of precious stuff from the shoulders of each porter to the floor of wet, red tiles; where Indians rip the bales, exposing the gray and soggy mass within.

All is activity at the shed, its white interior spotted with brown where chicle has discolored it. *Thud! thud! thud!* sound meaty blows of short, broad cleavers, as sinewy arms chop up the bricks. That's to make sure no pebbles, clay or overalls lurk coyly inside! If they do, somebody gets docked, for every cake of gum is stamped with the *chiclero's* initials. And each one, too, has bits of it taken to a laboratory upstairs, there to be most carefully tested for its "moisture-content." No unduly "watered stock" gets by, at Cozumel.

You think it one of this world's fine sights as you watch those powerful Indians, barefooted and in undershirts, laboring at an immense mountain of gum in a corner of the shed. Two or three of the Mayas are chewing bits of the raw gum. Here or there an Indian has a cud stuck to his broad sombrero, ready

for another go. I've tried the raw gum myself, and it's not half bad. Just a little sugar and flavoring, and there you are with the finished product.

You watch other Indians packing huge henequen bags, propping the bags up with blocks of gum, and with big sticks hammering chicle into them till just the right weight is reached. They bear the sacks to scales where a custom-house officer carefully checks them. Adding a tiny bit of gum, cutting off a sliver, they bring the weight correct to an ounce. No guesswork with stuff as valuable as chicle!

Then as other Mayas sew up the filled bags, you ask:

"And what's the idea of that man sweeping the floor all the time?"

"Vital economy," Adams informs you. "A bit of loose gum here, and another bit there, sticking to the outsides of the bags and getting wasted, runs into tons and tons a year. And tons of gum mean money. It's bad enough, old chap, to have the chicle shrink in weight after we pay for it, without losing any afterward!"

And so, before your very eyes, part of the chewing-gum process goes steadily forward—the immensely long process that begins at some snake-infested *chiclero* camp in Quintana Roo, only to end by exercising some American jaw. All Cozumel's prosperity rests on that process. Without it the far quaint Island of the Swallows would perish.

Not till chewing-gum grew popular did Cozumel begin to prosper. As recently as eighty-five years ago it was practically uninhabited. The Spanish conquista-

dores here—as everywhere they could—played hob with the aborigines. And Cozumel was one of the earliest portions of the New World taken by Spain. For it was away back in 1518 that Juan de Grijalva sailed four top-heavy ships westward from Cuba, discovered the island, and forthwith annexed it to Spain.

Grijalva reported finding large houses and towers of masonry and plaster; and we may safely assume that the Cozumel Mayas, like those on near-by Mujeres Island, wore “mantles and shirts of colored or pure-white cotton, with gold and jeweled ear-rings, and feathered head-dresses.” The forefathers of today’s chicle workers failed to realize that the newcomers meant to oust them, and thus were friendly; crowding to see the Spaniards, eagerly touching their weapons, wondering at their splendid whiskers. As we have already noted that the Mayas are almost beardless, a fine white soldier “bearded like a pard” must have seemed a godlike creature.

The *cacique* gave the Spaniards jars of honey, but the Spaniards were shy of possible poison and refused such hospitality; whereupon the Indians offered jewels and shirts of cotton cloth. Though impressed by the Mayas’ superior civilization, which had so astonishingly developed without metal tools, beasts of burden, or even wheels, the invaders broke all the idols they could get their hands on and heaved others into the sea.

“To arms!” cried the outraged Mayas. But gunpowder and coats of mail defeated bows and arrows, spears and turtle-shell shields, and down the Indians went. Gradually depopulated, Cozumel staged a comeback less than a century ago, and began thriving only

when American mandibles began to grind away at Yucatan chicle.

Except for chewing a little gum and driving four flivvers, the island is one of the few places in this narrowing world that hasn't been modernized by American ideas. The American tourist species simply doesn't exist there, and life remains quiet, simple, drowsy; the spirit of *mañana* still reigns, and nobody conjugates the verb "to hustle." Apart from a dingy little once-in-a-while movie, a game of dominoes in a café, or a novena, no press of diversion distracts the mind. That is, nothing but fireworks.

What do you mean, fireworks? I mean rockets and pinwheels and crackers. No special feast-day or holiday is needed for such—and Lord knows holidays and feast-days are thicker than hops, in Mexico! Any old time at all, at Cozumel, is the right time for pyrotechnics. Every night you hear them going *bang-bang!* or throwing sheaves of sparks against the lovely tropic constellations. The porters, fishermen, *chicleros*, and all see no waste of money in an exchange of lathering, sun-cooked toil for a *boom!* or a *sissss-plunk-ah!* Even rockets at seventy-five cents apiece they consider fine investments.

"Only four or five hours' work, señor, will pay for one. And *Dios mío*, what a sight how magnifico, to behold a *volador*—a rocket, what you call—ascending at night from the beach! . . ."

Again a case of easy come, easy go. But to return to our novenas—

I was lucky enough to see one, in honor of some saint, a velvety night with all the stars in the universe glowing their very best, all dusted and polished for the

occasion. Crude goatskin drums were booming, brasses discordantly blaring, as I stumbled through dark and rutty streets toward a crowd of white-clad Mayas filling a back thoroughfare.

From open windows and doors of a brilliantly illuminated hut, mellow candle-light trembled on coppery faces, gleamed in black and sparkling eyes. The hut blazed with glory from hundreds of candles stuck into empty beer-bottles that stood on a rude altar decked with masses of paper flowers. Paper, mind you, in an island of natural and gorgeous blooms like Cozumel! But no real flowers, I suppose, would have been considered valuable enough for a novena.

Men, women, children, even unto babes in arms, packed the hut, stolidly watching the flames, the gaudy blossoms—their nearest possible approach to the world-ideal of Beauty. In front of the altar an extraordinarily fat Indian woman, kneeling, crossed herself; while in and out jostled a continuous procession.

Farther up the dark street, another and more active part of the novena was going on. There the crowd was clotted thicker, all the way from doddering patriarchs to mewling babes, and all intent on the *baile*, the dance taking place within.

No dance-hall could have been simpler. The long, bare room, with roof of lashed and thatched poles, had for sole decoration a few religious pictures. Carbide lamps slashed raw lights and shadows over the watching throngs packed everywhere about the walls. So dense was the jam that dancers and musicians hardly found space. Those musicians—Indians all—huddled at one end. Fourteen of them, they committed assault and battery on something like a tune, using

brass and drums, gourds, rattles, and what-not as weapons.

Strange and ragged was their tempo. It would have created a sensation in any discriminating jazz circles. To its alluring cacophony, men in shirt-sleeves and women in crying colors jerkily moved in that oddest and most stationary of all dances, a Mexican *danzón*.

For an hour I stood there, wondering that such things could be; mourning that no artist was at hand to paint the scene. Then home again to the kindly English house of Adams; home along vague streets where goats blatted in the star-set gloom, bats flickered, and uncertain lights in Maya huts revealed strange pictures of a life dreamlike in its unreality.

It was by starlight, under the warm glow of an immense and almost-to-be-touched Milky Way, that I saw my last of Cozumel. One midnight found me sitting on the platform of the chicle warehouse, with various Mayas, waiting to go aboard the *Lion of the Seas*, bound for Progreso.

The vaguely sweet perfume of the chicle blent with the salt aroma of sea and surf; and ever, mingled with that surf's gentle breathing, sounded a faint, continual creak and murmur as the piles of gum settled down and down.

Dim figures passed, speaking a prehistoric tongue I could not understand. San Miguel was falling asleep. But there was no sleep for me. I must up and away, to unknown places; for so my life is, ever up and away. On, always on—forward, march!

"*Vamos, señor!*" at last a shadowy, arriving Indian bade me. Dunnage-bag over shoulder, I followed down

the long and half-seen wharf where gentle surges curled to phosphorescent flame. A native canoe received me. What seemed the wraith of a Maya boy paddled me out over limpid, star-mirroring seas to the waiting schooner.

Aboard, in a space that might possibly have held ten passengers, I found about forty Indian men and women, with children, turkeys, dogs, pigs, and baggage, much of which consisted of *tequila* and other amazingly ardent spirits. No place to sleep but a bit of the forward deck with my head resting on the anchor. Two days and nights of marvelous miseries before me. Nothing to eat but *totopostes*, rice, and fish. Roaring reefs, unlighted and perilous coasts, devastating heat, and a thousand tick-bites raging. Never mind; such is your lot, if you elect to see far and untraveled places.

Up with a rattle came the anchor, destined to be my pillow. The trades filled our bellying canvas, pale-looming in the tropic night. Uncertain gleams glinted on coppery faces. Cigarettes waxed and waned. The *Lion of the Seas* moved gently forward, a ripple at her bow.

Somewhere ashore a cock shrilly crowed. A few faint shore-lights dimmed and faded. Out of my life slipped Cozumel, out and away forever—vague island in a sea of strange and pleasant dreams.

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